

THE LIFE OF LOVE



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THE LIFE OF LOVE

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JAMES MUDGE, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF "HONEY FROM MANY HIVES," "GROWTH
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"The Greatest is Love"

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EXPLANATION.

THE soul, no less than the body, needs food. This little book aims to supply such nutriment. The life of love, which is another name for the only genuine Christian life, is here considered in a variety of aspects and relations. Important distinctions are emphasized, helpful illustrations supplied, practical suggestions offered, and stimulating thoughts presented. Condensed nourishment will be found here, needing much meditation to be mixed with it, in order to give the best results. The reader is earnestly requested to pray as he peruses these pages. If he obtain benefit from such perusal, the writer will be very glad to be made aware of it, and will receive encouragement therefrom to send out still other ventures of like nature.

J. M.

WEBSTER, MASS.

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THE LIFE OF LOVE.

It is common to think that a life all love is a perfect life. And, in a certain sense, this is true. Many passages of Scripture, many considerations of reason, give it sanction. If God is love, then surely the life of love is a godly life. There was nothing that Christ more constantly insisted on in his followers, or rated higher, than love. Both Paul and John also accorded it the first place, putting it plainly at the head of all qualities and acquirements. Without looking, then, too closely just now at the exact meaning of the word perfect, we may take it for granted that the ideal life, that for which we are supremely to strive, is a life in which love is the leading element, the controlling principle. No one probably would dissent from this, or raise a controversy here. A life springing from, leading to, and everywhere permeated with, love is

something most admirable, beautiful, and on all accounts to be desired. There is general agreement in this. But when we come to ask what such a life would be in its daily manifestations, or when worked out in practical details, large differences of conception arise. Some would call a given life very deficient in love, while others would find in it no manner of fault. A few of the mistakes most frequently made may be studied with profit.

1. It is a mistake to think that love is synonymous with softness, gentleness, graciousness, mildness, meekness, tenderness, and, in general, the especially *feminine* qualities. Love is always portrayed by painters and orators as a woman. Women are considered as particularly qualified for and dedicated to love. A sharp line is drawn between justice or righteousness and love or kindness. Anything hard, stern, severe, strong, strenuous, insistent, involving a firm will and measures likely to give pain—anything specifically *masculine*—is not considered quite compatible with love. Love is supposed to be all smiles and sunshine, ever acquiescent and complacent.

Is not this the usual idea, the popular

thought? It would seem so. But it can not be a correct conception—not if a life of love is even to approach the perfect life. It appears to us true that a breast in which there is nothing but love can flame with anger, and thunder with wrath, and cherish deep hatred, and that these things—love and hate—are in no way irreconcilable. On the contrary, love necessarily implies hate. Hate of the evil is included in love for the good. It is not of an indiscriminating, undistinguishing love that we speak—a love helpless, unguided, going out toward everything and everybody alike, making no difference, mechanically poured forth. No, indeed. The purest specimens of love that we know are not at all of this sort.

God is all love; but he punishes the sinner, and hates sin. The severe and harsh aspects of nature are from him, as well as the smiling ones. The tornado, the earthquake, the volcano, the famine, the pestilence, the desert, the glacier, the storm-tossed ocean, are his no less than the verdant mead, the fertile plain, the fruitful harvest. The laws of retribution, pitiless, remorseless, exacting; the laws which proclaim that whatsoever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap, with-

out the least variation or exception; the laws that visit every violation with penalty, whether that violation be from ignorance and weakness, or not,—these are from God. And they assuredly show the kind of love that God has—a love that is anything but indiscriminate softness and general gush.

Christ was all love when he lashed the Pharisees, and declared the inexorable nature of the conditions of salvation; when he looked round upon his enemies with anger, prophesied their destruction, and warned the people against their wickedness; when he cursed the fig-tree, and upbraided Capernaum, and pronounced the doom of Jerusalem; when he called Herod a fox, and characterized certain classes of men as dogs and wolves and swine, and rebuked those who insulted him. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ was masculine as well as feminine. He had to be, or he could not have been a perfect man, could not have done the work he came to do, or been the example which he was to the race.

The model parent, who is all love for his children, never thinks, unless he be a natural fool, that he is to exercise no restraint upon

them; that he is to let them have their way always because they want it, and it is, for the time, pleasanter. No; he frowns as well as smiles; he chastises as well as caresses; he refuses as well as assents,—all from the same impulse of true parental love and deep regard for their best interests.

Everybody, then, admits, when their attention is closely called to it, that love must at times be severe and stern, must do things that are very disagreeable to those who are the objects of its displeasure. And there is a practical conclusion from this fact which has an important bearing, both on our judgments of other people and our reception of their judgments. They whose plans we cross, whose feelings we hurt, whose conduct we criticise or denounce, will not be especially impressed with our love. They will not call it love, but something very different. They will storm and revile, and impute motives, and scoff, and sneer. The best of men have been thus ill-treated. Christ's love was not at all appreciated by the Sadducees and Pharisees, the lawyers and scribes. God's love is not understood by the sinner. Parental love

is not recognized at the time by the disobedient, willful son. It is the same in society and the Church. It is an idle dream to expect all men to speak well of us, however good we are. The very fact that we are good makes the evil dislike us. Saints are appreciated much better after they are dead than when they are alive. In life, in the midst of the conflicts which the carrying out of their plans provokes, they have many unpleasant names flung at them, many rude jokes made about them. But God's favor is not regulated by a majority vote; and a life over which all heaven will one day resound with congratulations may have been one that here was very lonely.

This, then, is the first caution to be observed, if we would form a correct conception concerning the life of love: Do not rule out the masculine element; do not make it impossible for men in responsible positions, with authority to exercise and decisions to render that will run counter to the desires and preferences of many—in a word, for the leaders in affairs—do not make it impossible for such to be the best sort of Christians. Honor those who, in these times of vote-

seeking and thoughtless good-nature, are sternly faithful to duty and the larger good. Our civilization needs them terribly. Do not mark them down in the scale of being. Do not so define love as to shut them out, and restrict it to the nonentities and ciphers. There can be no more serious error. Love pertains to the strong and the great, to those best fitted to be supreme in the councils and actions of men. We look for the time when the rulers of nations, kings and presidents and governors and judges, shall be filled with love divine. It would be wrong so to think of love as to make that impossible.

2. Another mistake is to suppose that much love implies much light, wisdom, knowledge—that love will necessarily keep people from errors in practice; that it will secure good judgment at all times, acquaintance with human nature, tact, skill in getting along with those around us—success. It will not do this. Love makes the intention good; but something more than this is needed to bring about results. With the best intentions in the world, if we are ignorant of the best way of going to work, or if our materials are poor, we can not do a good

job. If we have had no training in carpentry, all the love imaginable will not enable us to construct a serviceable piece of furniture. Love has its reward, and knowledge has its reward; and they are very different. Comply with the law of good work, and good work surely follows. In default of that compliance, no amount of right motive will save us from failure. The motive keeps one innocent of blame; but compliance with conditions is the only thing to produce results. The absolutely best course to take in a given matter may be hidden from us, though we do our utmost to find it. We can see afterwards where we blundered, although our love was perfect all the time. We were not even thoughtless. We tried hard, and did all we could; yet we were harmful where we meant to be useful; we hindered where we intended to help. We make mistakes, all of us, in the management of our business, our families, our Churches. We feel no remorse about it, though we are grieved; no remorse, because we did what we really thought was right at the time. We have not fallen into sin, but into error; that is, into misfortune. If there had been lack of love, we

should have sinned; but for unavoidable lack of light we can only be sorry, we are not condemned.

This defect of judgment or knowledge is much greater in some than in others. Where it is at all glaring, or where it particularly touches us, our admiration of the character of the persons concerned will inevitably be affected, and we shall find it difficult to admit that they are supremely Christlike, or to consider, perhaps, that they even lead the life of love. Our annoyance at their blunders, our impatience with their constant failure in efficiency and their hindrance to the work which they are trying to help, so detracts from our respect for them that we can hardly give them proper credit for what excellence they have. "*They*, all love!" we say; "*they*, perfect Christians; *they*, to be admired as ideal saints! Perish the thought!" We do not want to be like them; we can hardly help despising them. And the world in general does despise them. "Good?" they say; "these people? Yes, perhaps so; but good for nothing! The Lord deliver us from such goodness!" That is what most would say, because they do not discriminate be-

tween love and light, between good intentions and good results, between blamelessness of purpose and consummate ideal character.

So here again is call for caution. We must not expect our love, however full and perfect, to be fully appreciated by those around us. Not only by those whom we conscientiously oppose, but by those whom we unwittingly offend through our stupid blunders and innocent errors, we shall be blamed and discredited. Love will not get its due meed of merit, because of its failures in wisdom and knowledge, not less than because of the necessity it is under to fight the evil in the world. An immature, undeveloped character, with a good deal of ignorance and childishness about it, *may* be all love in a certain sense, and perhaps is all it ought to be for the time being, considering how little opportunity it has had to grow, but it is not all we hope it will be in due season; nor is it all *we* ought to aim at in order to make ourselves perfectly acceptable to God and useful to men.

3. Still, again, it is a mistake to suppose that love will remove all differences of temperament, all constitutional defects, all physical

ailments, all nervous disorders, all the effects of hysterical and dyspeptic diseases. It will not make people over after one pattern. Many really seem to expect this. They set their mind on some exceptionally-constituted person, most harmoniously put together, with all natural graces and gifts, extremely amiable in disposition, blessed with good health and perfect tact, serene, reposeful, cheerful, unselfish, obliging; and they expect everybody who reaches a high state of grace, or professes so to do, to become instantly just like that person. It is an unreasonable expectation. The great lines of our natural disposition will never be wiped out; never, in this world or the next. Peter will not become John, nor Paul, nor Thomas, no matter how long he lives, no matter how much love he attains or absorbs; and those who are particularly fond of Paul or John will never like Peter quite so well. It is not possible, in the nature of things, that they should. These constitutional affinities which make us different from one another compose a large part of our humanity. They are indelibly inwrought for wise purposes. It would not be at all well to have everybody alike. The

work of the world would not be so efficiently done. These differences belong to the Divine plan, and serve many a good end. We can not be the same in body, or perfect in body, as a rule; and the body necessarily affects the mind. Our state of health is an important factor in our character and in the outcome of our life. The sanguine temperament will be certain to comport itself otherwise than one which is phlegmatic or melancholy. Love will act differently through these different temperaments, will have different external manifestations, will not appear to be the same thing; perhaps we may say, will not *be* the same thing.

And most people will not discriminate. It is idle to expect it. They will ascribe to a defect of love what is not of necessity such, or is simply love exhibiting itself in a way natural or inevitable to that temperament. The water may be equally pure, though the channel or pipe through which it flows may give it a peculiar flavor. This opens an intricate and complicated subject, which can not here be fully followed out. But it serves to show how difficult it is for us to make proper estimate, either of our-

selves or of other people, as to whether we are all love or not; in other words, as to whether certain things which look like defects are blameworthy or not, whether they come because we do not love enough, or because of some wholly innocent natural trait.

Because others do not consider us full of love is no sufficient reason why we may not really, in God's sight, be thus full. And when others *do* consider us thus, they may easily be mistaken. People may estimate us too high, as well as too low; may ascribe that to virtue which is only natural excellence, having no merit, and *vice versa*.

And our own estimate of ourselves is as apt to be mistaken as that of other folks. There is no way to tell infallibly just where we are in the scale of goodness. What then? This fact, that we can not certainly tell our exact position, should check or modify the positiveness and definiteness of our professions; but it need not alter the earnestness with which we strive to get on. Not at all. It is our duty to grow in love as rapidly as possible, to possess and be possessed by it as completely as is within our reach. To

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grow in love, this is our great business. It is what Paul prays for with respect to his Philippian converts (i, 9), "that your love may abound yet more and more," or "grow yet stronger and stronger;" and it is what he thanks God for in regard to his Thessalonian friends, to whom he says (2 Thess. i, 3), "Your love is continually increasing." So may it be with us all!

A COMMAND TO LOVE.

SOME stumble over the fact that God *commands* the love of his creatures, love being a thing not subject to compulsion. Love, it is well said, must come freely, or it is worthless. How, then, can it be a matter of command?—"Thou *shalt* love."

The explanation is this: God is so far above us that, without the authorization of a positive command, we should not feel that we had the right to give him our affections. It is his place to assure us that we may love him by issuing a royal mandate requiring it. A monarch is regarded as conferring a favor upon his subject

by coming to visit him. The invitation must proceed from above, not from beneath.

The wooing of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Coburg had to be conducted in a different way from that of ordinary people who meet on a level. The social position of the Queen was so much superior to that of the Prince that the latter could not offer the lady his hand, as is usual with lovers. She had to make the proposition, and she managed it with much skill, as well as delicacy. It was a bestowment of highest favor on Prince Albert when she, in a certain sense, commanded his love.

So, when God stoops to enter the poor dwelling of our hearts, and even proposes a covenant of marriage with us, he is bestowing a most princely gift which may well take the form of an order. It is for him to make the first advances, and indicate his royal pleasure. It is for us most cordially to respond, wondering the while what he can see in us that should make us the recipients of his bounty, but gladly accepting the glorious privilege of becoming closely united to him.

THE AUGMENTING OF SYMPATHY.

THERE are few sounder pieces of counsel than that given by Sir Arthur Helps in regard to the difficult duty of being sincere and considerate at the same time, or of acting both truly and kindly. He says that it is better to enlarge our sympathy so that more things and people are pleasant to us, rather than to increase the civil and conventional part of our nature so that we are able to do more scheming with greater skill. Who can doubt that this is indeed the right way out of the trouble? If we but extend and deepen our sympathies, the prejudices which have clung to us will fall away, our uncharitableness will take its departure, we shall understand folks much better, and there will be no necessity for *pretending* to like them. The enlargement of knowledge helps to enlarge sympathy. So does a deepened sense of our own infirmities and failures.

“The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
And he is mine forever.”

LOVING WITH THE MIND.

It seems very easy for many people to forget that we are commanded to love God, not only with all the heart, but with all the mind. They imagine that they will have gained a perfect character, will have become altogether Christlike, if their heart—that is, their intention—is pure; if their will to do right is good; if their affections are supremely centered on God. It is a mistake which has wrought great harm, brought disrepute on an important doctrine, led people to make professions which their behavior has belied, and produced discouragement, failure, and loss.

The attainment of morally perfect conduct, flawless beauty of character, loveliness of life, requires much study and very considerable knowledge. Christ alone is the true standard below which we can not rest completely content. He perfectly exemplified the virtues which, taken together, constitute Christianity. It is a very important part of our business to find out by close application of mind what these virtues

include when practically applied and minutely carried out in our daily life. If we are babes in this knowledge, our lives will be far from edifying; we shall alienate those we wish to win, disgust those we desire to attract, and be anything but true representatives of Jesus. Diligent use of our understanding on these problems of behavior is largely called for, that we may be less and less disagreeable to those around us, less and less faulty in our deportment, more and more divine in our doings. Only in this way will our actions increasingly conform to the unchangeable law of the Lord, and we be increasingly useful to man, increasingly satisfactory to God. Thus shall we more and more conform our conduct to an ever-enlarging conception of what it means to be entirely good. Thus shall we get nearer and nearer to the ideal Christian.

“Trust to the Lord to hide thee,
Wait on the Lord to guide thee,
So shall no ill betide thee,
Day by day.
Rise with his fear before thee,
Tell of the love he bore thee,
Sleep with his shadow o’er thee,
Day by day.”

AGGRESSIVE, BUT NOT REPULSIVE.

FEW things are more worthy of close study than the question, How can we war, and yet be winsome? How can we be intense in our love for Jesus, and yet maintain thoroughly cordial and sympathetic relations with those who are not his friends? How can we be loyal to the truth, and yet loving to neglecters or opponents of the truth? How can we feel and show due appreciation for the good there is in sinful people, without in any way condoning their sins or giving them encouragement in their vain excuses?

A very delicate and difficult line of conduct is here hinted at, requiring much tact. Few are equal to such straight walking. Nearly all lean unduly to one side or the other. There is either some indifference to the right, some laxity as to principle, or there is a failure in charity, a touch of Pharisaism. Blessed is he who has the wisdom to strike the golden mean, or is so comprehensive in his make-up as to include a full and equal development of these opposite quali-

ties. We know of nothing better to recommend for progress in this direction than a study of the mind of the Master, the one perfect Model.

HOW CAN WE LOVE EVERYBODY?

WHAT does perfect love demand with reference to our neighbors? It is a question requiring careful consideration, for it is quite as easy to put the standard too high as it is to put it too low. We think it well to remove some misapprehensions by showing what the command does not mean. It is of great importance that men should be brought to believe in the practicability of the duty, and saved from looking at it as mere visionary moonshine, out of the question considered as a working rule of life in the midst of affairs.

1. Loving everybody does not mean that we are to love everybody in the same way. There are different kinds of love. Besides maternal or instinctive love, there is the love of complacency or approval and the love of benevolence or good will and compassion. This latter goes

out toward all men, with little or no regard to their character. It is possible for us to feel and show the utmost kindness towards a man in whose conduct we take no pleasure. Moved by pity for his wretchedness, we put forth the most strenuous exertions for his help. Our love for him leads us not to approve, but to reprove; yet it leads us also to do our best to make him such as we can approve.

2. Loving everybody does not mean that we are to love everybody to the same extent. There are different degrees of love in each kind, all proper and right. There are inner and outer circles of friendship. There must be; Jesus had them among his disciples. So, too, in regard to our benevolence. We are not obliged to do good to all alike. The apostle plainly recognizes this when he says, "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith;" that is, to those who have special claims upon us, or who have shown special worthiness.

3. Loving everybody does not mean perpetual poverty on our part; does not mean that it is our duty to share our goods equally with those who have less. We can love people sincerely

without feeling that it is our business to raise them to precisely the same level of comfort that we have; or, when that is impossible, feeling compelled to descend to the same level of discomfort that they have. It would plainly be most calamitous to have all good men reduced to poverty, and have only wicked men left in possession of property. Christianity is not communism, nor mendicant monkery.

4. Loving everybody does not mean, under all circumstances, peace; that is to say, it does not imply the obliteration of conscience, the abandonment of principle, and the renunciation of right. Very carefully put is the apostolical injunction on this head: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." It is not always possible, and it does not always lie with us to decide the question. "First pure, then peaceable," is the rule that must be followed. And he who regards purity, or the discharge of his obligation to God, as coming first, will frequently find that contention, not peace, comes next. Spiritless acquiescence in the dominion of wrong is never right. It is not peace, but poltroonery. It is not love, but cowardice. When

men would force us to do wrong, peace is sin. When men in our presence are wronging others, peace is base. And sometimes, when men are wronging us, it is our duty, for the sake of others, for the protection of the community, quite as much as for our sake, to give battle, and to fight hard. Yet we may be full of love all the time.

5. Loving everybody does not mean that we are always to forget self. That would be to make love a blind enthusiasm. It would be to use up our powers heedlessly, foolishly, at hazard, in ill-adjusted service. Some care of self is necessary for the largest, truest, and really noblest self-sacrifice. A man who is using his whole life in labor for others, must, for the sake of those others, look after his own health, and take proper recreation. A doctor or surgeon often has to postpone a particular service, however important, in favor of the general serviceableness of his life in the long run. To have some heed to one's self, refusing to incur needless risks, or to take on burdens too great for one's strength, is no evidence that one does not love one's work or the people worked for.

These limitations, we believe, good sense and reason demand. They clear the ground for a more positive statement of what loving everybody really includes and implies.

“GREAT THIRST LAND.”

THERE is a book with the above title, describing one of the waterless regions of the world—North Australia, we think. But the name is one closely applicable to the hearts of some Christian believers. Would there were more! For it is only they who greatly thirst that shall be largely filled. Most true it is that “the lack of desire is the ill of all ills,” since God loves to be longed for; and without such longing on our part, to correspond with his longing for us, there can not be that divine union which shall make us one with him.

We must wander in the Thirst Land before we can reside in the Beulah Land. How few there are that are all on flame with eagerness to know Him completely; that covet more the dear sight of his marvelous face than anything else

in the wide world; that are determined at whatever cost to gain the largest possible measure of the grace of God! The promises of God, rich as they are, ought to be fully matched by our aspirations. We ought to resolve to sound the utmost depths of the mine of wealth opened to us in the words of Christ and his apostles. We should count all but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus. We disparage him beyond expression when we rest satisfied with what we have thus far known of him. There is a whole heaven of bliss waiting to be revealed to us even now in the wonderful love of our Lord, and we are comparatively, if not wholly, indifferent to the glorious fact. Far too easily content are we with present attainment. What will make us thirst more? Thought will do it; prayer will do it; and much converse with those who have most experienced the bliss there is in Jesus will gloriously do it.

“It is not the wall of stone without
That makes the building small or great,
But the soul’s light shining round about,
And the faith that overcometh doubt,
And the love that stronger is than hate.”

—LONGFELLOW.

ALONE WITH GOD.

IF statistics could be collected as to the amount of time spent by the Church in its closet, we think the figures would be extremely startling. There would be no further cause for wonder at the prevalent lukewarmness and laxity. Neglect of closet duties may indeed be counted effect as well as cause of religious apathy; but we are disposed to place them rather in the latter class, because they are so plain an obligation and so simple a prescription. He who thrusts them aside puts away the easiest, clearest method of spiritual growth. It is something within the reach of all; not that in every case it can be compassed without effort, but a way can always be found where the will exists. It has the most direct and immediate connection with the result desired, and never fails, when properly pursued, to bring it to pass. Nothing can take its place. There is no short cut to the heights of piety.

A few revival-meetings, an hour or two of spasmodic ecstasy, are not sufficient for attain-

ing the delightful realms of religious tranquillity and power. It is far safer to depend on quiet, systematic gains. It is thus the most substantial, serviceable, oaklike piety is built up. Daniel, in his chamber, praying, is the essential precursor to Daniel unterrified before the lions. We read of him that "he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God." Similarly the psalmist says, "Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray and cry aloud." Who will say that this is not a reasonable and wholesome custom? Yet it would be dangerous to ask in any Christian assembly, how many of those present follow it. It would be found, we fear, that nearly all suffered the whole day of busy cares to intervene between the hurried, half-digested mouthfuls of spiritual nourishment afforded in the crowded morning and the tired evening. Among the many lines of reform pressing for attention in the habits of the members of our Churches, it seems to us that scarce any is more indispensable than reform in attention to these powerful helps to growth in grace which cluster around the still hour. More time must be spent alone with God,

or we shall not see what we so much desire, either in our own religious uplifting or outward results upon the world.

LOVING OUR ENEMIES.

WHAT does it mean? How are we to love those least lovable, those who may fairly be counted as at enmity with us, plotting to harm us?

In the first place, love includes doing them good just so far as we can find or make opportunity, and just so far as we have time or strength or money that we feel at liberty to use in this direction. If our enemy hunger, we are to feed him, the apostle says; and we may surely extend the same principle to all other needs of his that it is in our power to supply. We must do our very best in every way to show him that we bear no ill-will, and that we have only kindness toward him in our heart. And the very process of acting it out will increase it within. The more we do for a person, the deeper interest we take in him. Hence, oftentimes to ask a kindness from one who has been distant or unfriendly, if we do not make

too large a demand, will draw out his love decidedly more than doing him a good turn. But it is well to do both. Give and take. Affect not the proud superiority which only gives, nor be the cringing, burdensome dependent who only takes. Pleasant, equal intercourse is what produces and cements and repairs friendship—intercourse of deed, of thought, and of word.

Not only doing pleasant things for our enemies, but also speaking pleasant things of and to them, is included in genuine love. We are likely to have more opportunities to practice this latter than the former. He who hates us may be in want of nothing that we can supply; but chances to speak about him will be many. And we must see to it that we say all the good about him we honestly can, and when we can say no good, we must say nothing. Loving a person means excusing the motive when it is impossible to excuse or defend the act; it means finding an explanation that will be to his credit, if such a thing is within the bounds of possibility; it implies a holy ingenuity in kind, benignant constructions of what seems, on the surface, to be wrong; it implies a perverse incredulity as to

the evil thing which is charged having ever really happened; it implies a resolute fixing of the thought on the good qualities of others and a firm determination not to speak ill or think ill of them, unless plain duty demands it. And we are to speak pleasantly, not only of, but to him who has done us a wrong, if he gives us a chance. Often he will. Half the time he keeps up the antagonism because he thinks we are harboring hardness; and, when he finds we are not, he is prepared to meet us half way. It is hard work for one to quarrel alone. And it is our business to make it as plain as words and ways can make it, that, so far as we are concerned, only love reigns.

There is another thing. Jesus divided the matter with much exactness when he said, by way of explaining what was embraced in love to enemies, "Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for those that despitefully use you." Those we can not pray for we fail to love. We must intercede for them as Job did for his sons; as Stephen, with dying breath, did for his murderers, and as Paul did for those faithless ones who forsook him in

his sorest need. And the glory of it is that, if we begin with right good will to pray for our persecutors, our love for them will certainly grow. The praying will set us to planning how we may answer our prayers, how we can compass the greater good of those whose names we have borne up morning and evening at the Throne of Grace.

These three things—action, speech, and prayer—we shall surely do if we are full of love. Christ commanded it, and also showed us how, by his own blessed example. Others have done it. The unrecorded conquests of kindness, where enmity has melted away before the unostentatious but persistent display of generous love, would fill many volumes.

And we can not afford, for our own sake, to say nothing about other people, to do any different. It does not pay to foster hatred, to take umbrage, or to have grudges and grievances. It is the worst possible investment we can make. A very little of this sort of thing will shut God out of our hearts, strip us of usefulness, and poison our life. “How pleasant it is to have the bird in the bosom sing sweetly!”

In this connection Bishop Janes's three rules may be commended. They were as follows: "Never to take offense, never to ask for explanations, and always to treat everybody as though nothing had happened." Occasionally an explanation is a good thing, but taking offense is always bad; and to go right on quietly, genially, in our relations with other people, as though we had seen nothing, heard nothing, is a wise proceeding and a great victory.

O the beauty and the benefit, the gladness and the glory, that there is in love, in loving even those that are most uncharitable and uncongenial! We may claim it as a part of our birthright. If we are God's children, we may get power from him to gain this blissful height. In his mighty name we may grasp and hold this grandest attainment.

BE MORE GENTLE.

A WELL-KNOWN member of the House of Commons, who died a few years ago, said, towards the close of his life, that, if he were called again to go over former lines of thought, he

would bear himself more gently and in a more modest, kindly, and charitable spirit than he once did. How often we hear of something similar to this being uttered by people as they draw near to the bound of life! Young men often think they must be very stern and strenuous, very hard and heroic, and must brand evils unflinchingly, no matter who is hurt in the process. They have much self-confidence, and are very sure that whatever does not commend itself to their judgment or taste is an evil that should be summarily put down. So they impinge with violence against a great many people, and create much unnecessary bad feeling. But when they are older grown, and understand human nature better, they begin slowly to realize what blunders they have made. They see it would have been better not to have pushed with such fierceness or condemned with such severity. We rarely feel that we have been too gentle and modest, too charitable and kindly.

“If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.”

—FABER.

SELFISH LOVE.

ALTHOUGH love and selfishness are accounted as nearly opposite and mutually exclusive as any terms can be, nevertheless there is a feeling for which no better name suggests itself than selfish love. In other words, the love and selfishness are so mingled that it is difficult to tell which of the two predominates. Do not the Savior's words to his disciples (John xiv, 28), "If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced because I go unto my Father," contain a much-needed lesson for many modern mourners? The disciples were so absorbed in themselves and in their own prospective loss that they had no thought for their Master's gain. And hereby their love was shown to be sadly defective, if not altogether lacking.

We see a similar display of self in much of the lamentation over departed friends to-day. The violent grief proclaims that not the good of those to whom we profess such extreme devotion, but our own inconvenience or loneliness, is the main thing in our thought. Disinterested love is rare. We are apt to love other people

because of what they have done or can do for us. Is not this loving self in a roundabout way? When our love gets truly Godlike, it will go out mainly toward those from whom we have no hope of return; it will delight itself in giving, not in receiving.

THE ONE STANDARD.

WE sometimes hear references to the "highest New Testament standard" of experience and life. The expression probably has its uses, but we question the strict propriety of it. It seems to imply that a variety of standards are recognized by Christ as legitimate. We do not so read his words. Thoroughgoing loyalty is fundamental to the New Testament idea of a follower of Jesus. No one can be his disciple without forsaking all. And this same attitude must be steadily, consistently maintained throughout the whole journey. The amount covered by the word "all" will continually enlarge as the disciple goes forward, and this will necessitate a constant deepening of the consecration; but he may and should be equally loyal from beginning to end.

If he is, then, under the ever-advancing light, the self-life will perpetually diminish, and the Christ-life perpetually develop, Christ being, from year to year, more and more fully formed within. Thus, while each moment all our conscious needs are met in Jesus, our unconscious selfishness is increasingly being shined upon, and so purged away.

WATCHES AND WILLS.

THE testing of watches by some presumably accurate noon signal is a matter of common occurrence, and has an importance of the minor sort. But the testing of our wills to see whether or not they move in exact harmony with the will of God, has an importance very far higher. And we can apply the test, not once a day merely, but many times; for the Divine will comes to us in some shape every moment, comes in all the varied occurrences that fill the hours. Do we find our wills chiming accurately with His, without deviation, not running ahead nor lagging behind, neither fast nor slow? The events that

do not accord with our natural likings are, of course, the special points of testing. Do we fly out at them? Do we fume and chafe and complain? Is there a struggle before we can bring ourselves to order, and resolve to harmonize with God's appointment? Then our wills are too slow. Or are we impatient at the tardy progress of events? Then our wills are too fast. It means a great deal to have them just right, moving like a timepiece of fine workmanship delicately adjusted. Few reach it. But it pays well for all endeavor. It is the only place of perfect peace.

To meet a living will of God in all, and to recognize the Father's love beating continually and most warmly in all His will,—this it is to have one's days crowned with gladness and one's soul filled with perpetual praise. And since practice makes perfect—and practice alone, in things that require our co-operation, and are accomplished by voluntary action, for only that which is purely passive can be made perfect in a moment by a higher power—shall we not do well carefully to cultivate the habit of bringing our wills into complete unison with God's? Will it not be a help also if, whenever we test the accuracy

of our watches, we bethink ourselves about the will, and raise an earnest prayer to God that we may reach perfect harmony of movement in this?

SEVEN GOOD MOTTOES.

VERY precious commodities are usually packed in small trunks; and the most important principles of conduct, suitable to be adopted as guides through life, may easily be put into pithy statements of briefest compass. When thus phrased, they form mottoes convenient to carry about, and often of inestimable value for the regulation of behavior. A few such maxims are here submitted as containing, when taken together, a pretty full directory of action, and every way worthy of adoption by all who would walk after the example of Christ.

1. *Deal directly with God.* It saves a world of worry. If we fix our thought on minor instrumentalities and subordinate agencies, and live down in the low realm of secondary causes, there is no end to our troubles; but if we receive all from God, do all for God, take all to

God, talk over all with God, bear all in God, walking always before him, leaning always on him, thinking always of him, there is no end to our peace. It is the best policy to deal, when possible, with the head of the firm rather than with the underlings. God is responsible, in one way or another, for everything that meets us. He is the sovereign of the universe, and holds the reigns of government firm. Men are his hands. Things are the products of his power. If we have complaints about the weather, or anything else that we do not like, they should be carried to Him who notes the sparrow's fall, and numbers the hairs of our head. "Is any cheerful, let him sing praise." Thus we live continually the life of faith, and become conquerors of circumstances.

2. *In I am, and on I must.* Everybody is in something. If in the wrong thing, let him get out with the least possible further loss; but if he is faced in the right direction, then, in God's name, forward. Difficulties will appear, but he who has the spirit of this "must" will see in them only additional incentives to exertion. He will not weaken or waver because of obstacles. He

will not own defeat, or admit the possibility of failure. He will reach the port, no matter how the winds blow. He who feels the force of this mighty "must" will persist, and, in spite of hindrances that might daunt ordinary men, will heroically press his way to the front. He refuses to hear of any other possibility. The "On I must" becomes changed to the more cheerful shout, "On I will," and it rings out so clear and sharp that everything gives way before it, and victory is his.

3. *I will not be unhappy.* No less a leader than Bishop Janes, hearing this declaration in the first year of his ministry from a poor and aged colored woman, passed it on in later times to his daughter, confessing that it had greatly influenced his life. That the will has much to do with our happiness, no thoughtful person denies or forgets. While we can not directly control our feelings, we can, by indirection, easily regulate them. We can command our thoughts. We can turn away from or turn to the consideration of disagreeable topics. We can dwell on the brighter or the sadder aspects of our situation. We can reckon up the comforts

or the discomforts of our lot. We can look up to the few or down to the many. We can cherish self-will, or heartily take God's will in its stead. If we do the latter, we shall be happy, as all the children of the King are privileged and required to be.

4. *Servant of all, servile to none.* Let there be no crawling and cringing and fawning before superior power and rank, no falling on one's knees or face to kiss the hand or lick the dust obsequiously. This is too base and groveling for any man made in the image of his Maker, especially if he be a brother of the Lord Jesus Christ and a child of the King of kings. But to be of some genuine use to others, however menial the labor; to do a real kindness, though it may require low bending,—is honorable in all. It was the Lord himself who said, "I am among you as he that serveth," and who came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." It was his chief apostle who declared his purpose to be "all things to all men." But the total absence of any sinister or selfish design on the part of both Jesus and Paul, makes it impossible that their civility should be construed as servility. Ser-

vility puts its neck beneath the foot of him who is on a higher rung of the social ladder, and at the same time crushes with its heel the head of him below. Service is so busy bending to stretch a hand to the one beneath that its head can not be touched from above. Servility is a curse to itself and all around. Service is thrice blessed.

5. *Sanctified affliction is spiritual promotion.* Trouble by itself will do us no good. It must be rightly used. But when thus used, nothing is more prolific of benefit. "It is a great loss to lose an affliction," said Wesley. And they do lose it who fail to get better by it. Nothing is easier. It takes much grace to get more grace, even by this means so well adapted to produce it. Everything depends on how the trial is received. If it be looked upon as "the shadow of God's wings"—wings that brood over us in tenderest affection—then rich fruitage follows. But if it be regarded as the shadow of a thundercloud, laden only with destruction and wrath, then only evil results. The same sun that softens the wax hardens the clay. The same heat that brings foul odor from the dunghill brings perfume from the flower. Blessed is he who

so eagerly desires spiritual growth that he welcomes the cross through which it comes.

6. *Fear not, only believe.* These words of our Lord to the anxious ruler of the synagogue apply to a thousand situations in our mixed-up modern life. "Be of good comfort," he says; "let not your heart be troubled." If this does not put spirit into us, what can? Faith makes fear impossible. It claims the promise, "There shall no evil befall thee," and walks the waves in constant triumph. He who believes God's Word can never be downhearted, never really in trouble. Happy indeed is he.

7. *With both hands earnestly.* It is the prophet Micah who speaks thus, writing of wicked men who do evil in this energetic manner. Should not the good counteract and oppose the evil with similar zeal? Many, alas! are working with but one hand; others serve with both hands, it is true, and yet lack that last finish to their character which is supplied by the "earnestly." They do not take off their coat and roll up their sleeves in God's cause, as if they really meant business. They do not say with St. Paul, "This one thing I do." Some few can be classified in this high-

est list. They are the *élite* of the kingdom, the picked soldiers of the King's own body-guard. How grand their honor, how keen their joy! We may be in the number, if we so determine.

TWO KINDS OF LOVE.

UNLESS one clearly and constantly discriminates between the two kinds of love, he will find himself involved in much difficulty, both with regard to the interpretation of the Bible and the guidance of daily life; for, on the one hand, we are commanded to love *not* the world; while, on the other hand, there is no plainer duty than to love *all* the world.

The latter is the love of benevolence, or well-wishing. We are to do good to all people just so far as we can, having indeed that sweet fountain of good will in our heart flowing so freely that nothing can stop it. It pours itself by an inward necessity upon all it can reach, even as the sun shines upon the evil and the good by the law of its own nature, and even as God himself loves all creatures because of a fullness of

affection which must make itself universally felt.

Very different from this is the love of complacency or approval, which can only be exercised upon those who are worthy of it. We can take pleasure only in those whose conduct commends itself in our eyes. We can find satisfaction only in such characters as are conformed to what we regard as the standard of right. Hence it is very plain that it never was intended that we should love everybody in the same sense. We can not, and should not, feel towards the wicked as toward the good. Loving our enemies is a wholly practicable duty when rightly understood.

TWO KINDS OF ANGER.

WE are commanded, at least once (Eph. iv, 26), to be angry. Anger is forbidden a great many times, from which it is perfectly evident that there is a righteous anger and a sinful anger.

Righteous anger is that feeling of displeasure for what we regard as wrong, which must dwell in every good man's breast. He who does

not possess it is necessarily a bad man, either practicing the wrong himself or tacitly approving of and conniving at it. He who regards flagrant evil with complacency, or is even silent in its presence, writes himself down a coward, if not a villain. Not to have anger when there is call for it is quite as much a fault as to have it when there is no call for it. Righteous anger is one of the great preserving forces of society, one of the best safeguards of morality and decency. There ought to be ten times as much of it exhibited as there is. It is deeply harbored in the heart of God. His wrath, hate, anger, indignation, are spoken of considerably more than three hundred times in the Scriptures; ever so much oftener than his love; and it is the business of all who would be like God to see to it that they resemble him closely in this.

But sinful anger, which we classify with violence and virulence, with vindictiveness and malice, is quite a different thing. It is a form of that selfishness which is always evil. It is tainted with bitterness, malignancy, personal resentment, and revenge. It is associated with rage and fury. It is never commendable.

Anger is right when it is roused, not by personal injury, but by sin and wrong. It has an important place to fill in the family, the school, and the State. In all sorts of government it is indispensable and necessary. But great care is needed that it be always of the sort that leaves no sting behind it because having no sin in it; the sort that makes the world, not worse, but better; the sort that God must approve because it is what he practices.

TWO KINDS OF FEAR.

THAT there are two kinds of fear spoken of in the Bible every one must be aware who has at all considered the fact that some fifty times we are bidden most peremptorily not to fear, while the commands to fear are very numerous. But the exact distinction between these two fears is not, perhaps, by all clearly grasped. It should be.

The good kind of fear is really reverence and watchfulness. It is allied to respect and esteem. It prompts to great carefulness, lest we

wound the feelings or lose the affections of the object of the fear. It is such a fear as a loyal son has toward his father, to whom he looks up with something of veneration. It is another form of vigilance, not mixed with torment or connected with pain, but quiet, serene, confident, and determined; a wholesome restraint against heedlessness and false security; a spur in the race, prompting us to take every precaution to make our calling to glory sure. It is a virtue, a part of love itself.

The bad kind of fear is really dread or cowardice, apprehension awakened by something likely to harm, or from which we wish to flee. It is "a painful emotion excited by anticipation of evil." It springs from sin, and leads to misery. It is the feeling of the slave in view of the lash. It is injurious every way, destroying peace and paralyzing power.

The good kind of fear, which we are to cultivate, can readily be distinguished from the bad kind, which we are to put away, by the fact that the latter is troubled about self, and the former about somebody else. The sorrow in the latter case is that our own comfort, or plenty, or ease,

or honor, seems likely to be diminished. The sorrow in the former case is that the comfort or honor of some one we love appears likely to be affected, which is a very different thing indeed. The two kinds of fear are heaven-wide apart; and yet the poverty of our language is such that we try to express both feelings with one word.

A FEW MISTAKES.

It is a mistake to think that when there are two courses presented to the mind, that which is most irksome and painful, most arduous and distasteful, is sure to be the course of duty. Some people have a sort of notion that everything pleasant or agreeable is in some way connected with sin. It is easy to see how this idea comes, and how, in a certain sense, it is natural. When the heart is unregenerate, most of its impulses are likely to be evil. And when the change that has passed over it is only partial, there is still so much of the "old man" lingering there that its choices must be viewed with distrust and suspicion. Indeed, there is no period

of life, no stage of sanctification, when we are altogether free from the danger of listening to the voice of self-gratification. There is a natural, innocent "self" that under some circumstances must be denied, as well as a sinful self. Watchfulness at this point there must always be. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that our Father is kind and loving, not austere and stern, delighting in the happiness, not the misery, of his children; their health, not illness; and making ample provision for the gratification of every innocent proclivity. Asceticism and monasticism pertain not to the true spirit of Christianity. Christ's burden is light when the back is willingly bent to bear it, because then the all-sufficient strength so freely accorded is plentifully obtained. On very many occasions he would certainly take the wrong path who should be guided in his decision chiefly or largely by the comparative amount of hardship presented.

It is a mistake to suppose that if we are very active in Christian work, our Christian experience will take care of itself, and does not need special attention. It is true that, as a rule, one whose experience is defective or declining, will

not take much interest in religious activity. But those of a certain temperament and surroundings may quite easily be led to substitute work for worship, and may backslide while very busy about the things of the sanctuary. It is not enough to *do*; the *why* we do needs to be closely scrutinized. The motives may be very largely mixed with earthly elements, and so the character of the service be very seriously flawed. Ministers, Sunday-school laborers, and such like, need to give heed to this point. It is the quality of the work quite as much as the quantity that tells. No one can afford to let his outward activities deprive him of the opportunity for meditation. Only by much of this can our principles take on strength, and the Spirit of the Master be fully gained.

It is equally a mistake to suppose that, without the doing of what Christian work is in our power we can be really growing in grace. A piety that consists chiefly of frames of feeling, or glowing sentiments, or heavenly visions, or shouts and songs, and does not materialize in any practical direction, fails to commend itself to the judicious as genuine, And we have the very best authority

for saying that it will not secure entrance into the heavenly kingdom. God may not himself need the work that we do—for he has other ways of accomplishing his ends—but we need it for the proper perfecting of our character. We can not be sure that we have the spirit of ministry unless we really minister when occasion comes, and unless we have that spirit we do not belong to Christ.

It is a mistake to consider that all who do not use our terms, or who differ with our way of putting things, are opposed to what is good and true. They may hold to the substance as firmly as we do, while taking a different view of the accessories. While in essentials unity is necessary, in all non-essentials there should be utmost liberty, and in everything there should be perfect charity. How many good causes are marred by an over-emphasizing of minor points and a consequent alienation between those who are really on the same side in all that is important. Rare is the large-hearted, catholic spirit of a John Wesley, who could say: "Though we can not think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one

opinion? Without doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these small differences."

It is a mistake to be so chary of praise as to keep back nearly all commendation till our friends are dead. Why do we do it? It arises, perhaps, partly from thoughtlessness, partly from selfishness, partly from bashfulness, partly from ignorance. Everybody likes to receive a word of praise and appreciation occasionally, and almost everybody is really benefited by it. Yet few have sufficient care for others' happiness and good to take the slight pains requisite to speak that word. It is not creditable to human nature. Let us be more heedful to scatter sunshine around us.

It is a mistake to imagine that it is safe to neglect little things, little infelicities of manner, little departures from truth or honesty or honorable conduct, little opportunities of usefulness. Sir Frederick Bramwell's inaugural address as president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science a few years ago, took for its text the words, "Next to nothing." He showed how the success of the civil engineer, and,

for that matter, of all scientific men, depends on taking into account the "next-to-nothings," on attention to the minutest details. So is it most emphatically with him who has undertaken to be a perfect Christian. Slipshod habits at any point will be fatal to his success. He can not safely neglect the smallest matter. He must be not merely about right, but wholly right. He must, for example, speak the exact truth, avoiding, so far as possible, the unconscious biases of unrecognized prejudice and the minute warpings and colorings of self-interest. He must keep clear of those trifling exaggerations and extenuations to which self-love so strongly impels. In debate, he must use the utmost care properly to apprehend and correctly to represent his opponent's position. So, too, must he look after the little leaks, in the way of hasty words, uncharitable speech, ungoverned thoughts, which, if not attended to, will be sure to empty him eventually of Christian joy.

Christian living is an art requiring constant study and practice. He will make most progress in it who applies himself to it with greatest diligence and concentration. We must not be "igno-

rant of Satan's devices," nor underestimate the subtlety and power of our great adversary. It is a wonderful thing to be, in the fullest, largest sense of the term, a complete Christian, fully representing the Master, a perfect image of our Lord.

"ALL RIGHTS RESERVED."

THESE words are well enough on the covers of magazines or title-pages of books as a protection against literary piracy; but when they appear stamped on the faces of folks, it is quite another thing. We have all seen such people. They are full to the brim of a sense of their own importance, and extremely jealous of the slightest encroachment upon their precious privileges. "No trespassing" appears in bold letters on every portion of their anatomy. They stand upon their dignity with a stiffness that rarely permits them to sit down or to take much ease. Their high claims are set forth, if not in words, at least in manner, on every occasion, and they plainly show that not an atom will be abated from them on any account. They are sticklers for the last far-

thing, and would rather die than yield a point of precedence, or allow to pass without challenge and resentment whatever they consider an infringement on their honor. They are continually suspicious, most uncomfortable to deal with, and so fond of justice that they entirely ignore mercy and are very chary of common civility. Alas for such! We pity them. Few things are more effective in producing a thoroughly unlovely habit of mind than the perpetual insistence upon the utmost limit of our rights. There is far greater nobility in the cheerful waiving of rights for the comfort and pleasure of others. Generosity is better than justice in this matter. Instead of "All rights reserved," let the motto be, "All duties thankfully acknowledged and faithfully performed."



LARGE-TYPE CHRISTIANS.

THE edition of large-type Christians seems to be small. A fuller supply is loudly called for, and is greatly needed at once. The demand is brisk, and the market is very scantily stocked. We mean Christians who can be read at a glance,

even by those whose eyesight for this sort of thing is unusually poor, Christians whose virtues stand out distinctly, and whose good qualities are so pronounced that no one, however hurriedly passing by, can possibly mistake them. The eyes that scan Christian character are blurred by sin and dimmed by prejudice. If it is demanded of them that they look close and long, that they take much pains to make out the meaning of our lives, we may be certain that they will fail to see us as plainly as we could wish. We must not put this strain upon them. We must make it easy for them to apprehend the message of God, however hastily they rush along.

How can we do it? Not, of course, in the Pharisaic mode, by sanctimonious phrases and peculiarities of dress and ostentatious charities; not by holding frigidly aloof from all innocent amusements and manly sports and social gatherings; not by being a hermit or a cynic, or a censor and accuser of one's brethren; but by an honesty which scorns to take advantage of legal quibbles or bend to the crooked customs of the street; by a truthfulness as straightforward as the sunlight; by a sympathy which comes as a blessed balm

of healing to many a wounded spirit; by a faithfulness to every trust, and a steadfast courage against every wrong, joined with a frank, open, modest confession of the Master whenever the occasion admits of it. When there are such words backed up by such works, no one has difficulty in perceiving the stamp of Christ. His seal, the seal of the Holy Spirit, is impressed so strongly and so broadly on some souls that even they who run may read it, and many who read it are led to run after it. The number of such is far too small. It should be immediately multiplied.

IS ANXIETY A DUTY?

THE Scripture doctrine as to the privilege and duty of the Christian to be free from anxiety is scarcely ever clearly set forth but what some good man rises to protest that a little worry is unavoidable and is really a good thing, inasmuch as it prompts to earnest action: which simply serves to illustrate how difficult it is on any subject to choose words that will be entirely free from ambiguity. It is evident that people

attach different meanings to the term "anxiety." The good man just referred to does not sufficiently discriminate, has not looked closely enough to his definitions. He mixes up proper forethought and suitable painstaking with worry and anxiety. But they are not at all the same. It by no means follows that one who has cast all his care on God, as we are repeatedly commanded to do, has cast away his common sense or his willingness to work. It is entirely possible to trust with all one's heart, and at the same time labor with all one's might. Freedom from anxiety is not synonymous with listlessness and indifference, though it appears to be so regarded by some.

Anxiety is something which we are, over and over again, in the Scripture commanded to have done with. Two quotations out of many are enough to cite: "Be not anxious" (Matt. vi, 25, 31, 34, R. V.); "In nothing be anxious" (Phil. iv, 6, R. V.) What is the anxiety which is here forbidden? The dictionaries, as well as the derivation and the common use of the word, fully warrant us in declaring that it means a painful uneasiness or distress of mind regarding something which we wish or fear. And this definition

has the great merit of being in complete harmony with the Biblical usage. It would be a very strange proceeding indeed for us, by our definition, to empty of all significance, or turn into nonsense, a positive order of the Master and of the Apostle Paul. They who plead that anxiety is a duty can hardly have reflected on the difficult position in which they place themselves with reference to the above-mentioned texts.

Jesus certainly takes great pains to show that anxiety about our temporal supplies—and nine-tenths of people's anxieties concern these things—is wholly incompatible with proper trust in our Heavenly Father, who knows our needs, and has promised to supply them, we, of course, on our side, doing our best to co-operate with his plans. Few have the hardihood directly to combat this position. The claim is more frequently heard that anxiety is not only justifiable, but distinctly commendable in regard to our friends and with respect to spiritual matters. The mother declares that she can not help being anxious for her boy, who is in the army—
anxious, not only for his physical safety, but for

his moral character and his salvation from sin. Her distress of mind, her disturbance of soul, she looks upon as a virtue, and resents the suggestion that it is both useless and sinful. It would certainly be wrong for her to refrain from doing anything which seemed likely to be a help to the young man. She must pray, she must send him good counsel, she must do her best in all available ways to protect him from harm and bind him to God. But when she has done all this, and while she is doing it, is she not fully authorized to intrust his safekeeping to One who watches over him with more than a mother's love, and who will do the very best possible for him? And if this trust is perfect, will it not bring her perfect peace and destroy her fears? Does not her trouble arise from the fact that she does not fully know God, or is not entirely willing that God's course with her son—which may involve much suffering to him and her—should be taken? Surely the many, many commands in the Bible to "fear not" are intended to cover all our fears; and fearfulness in every instance means faithlessness.

He who really trusts rests. A quiet mind

is not a mark of laziness or apathy, but of absolute confidence in Him who never fails his believing children. With him no emergency is unforeseen, no want unprovided for. His power is infinite; he can not err; his love is beyond our comprehension. The *stops* of a good man, as well as his steps, are ordered of the Lord. In leaning upon him we are beyond the reach of disappointment. He never takes anything away but to give us something better in its stead. He makes circumstances to become our servants. The riches of God's provisions for his people are but little apprehended by the average Christian; he does not search the Scriptures diligently, and meditate on them day and night, that he may know what God will do for those who prove him; and he does not account it a matter of any importance that by his doubts and fears he fails to glorify the Father. It is easy to make excuses that will seem to justify slight wrongdoings. It is easy to become content with a low standard of Christian living. It is natural to find fault with those who insist that there is a better way. But with those who walk continually by faith it has come to be an axiom that

where trust begins anxiety ends, and where anxiety begins trust ends. We are persuaded that, the more thoughtfully it is examined, the more thoroughly it will commend itself as true.

THE EYE OF THE MASTER.

A MAN once asked an Eastern sage, "What will most quickly fatten a horse?" The reply was, "The eye of the master." Many questions connected with Christian living might, with equal wisdom, be answered in the same way. What will most quickly lead to swift progress in divine things? The eye of the Master. What will most surely keep us in mind of duty? The eye of the Master. What will best guard us against impatience, unkindness, and all other steppings-aside from the straight path? The eye of the Master. In one sense it is always on us. Yet the practical effect is not secured unless we bear it in mind.

Our eye must also be on the Master. Our thought must take notice of his presence. Nothing is more vital to our advancement in holiness

than constant recollectedness of spirit. To watch and pray without ceasing is the key of the situation. The habit is not taken on except by effort; but the effort will not be irksome if there be full and fervent love behind it. And only much practice can make perfect in this, as in all things else. Love and labor, prayer and pains, toil and time and trust, are the words that contain the secret of success in this as in other attainments.

INTENTIONS SHOULD BE INTENSE.

MANY people make the mistake of rating their good intentions as equivalent to actions, and so swelling the credit side of their account beyond reason. And when they go still further, as they generally do, and dignify their idle wishes with the name of intentions, the harm done is very serious. They need to be plainly told that a wish is by no means a will, and that the will can not be accepted in place of the deed if it is in any way possible for the deed to be done. The trouble with a multitude of the intentions on which people pride themselves is that they are not in-

tense enough. The mind has not set itself in earnest on the accomplishment of the thing in hand; hence it lets little hindrances frustrate the infirm purpose, and tries to draw comfort from the thought that it meant to do right. But this will not avail. It is one thing to be nobly indifferent about results when the hardest kind of work has been put in to bring them to pass; but the indifference is ignoble which satisfies itself with a half-hearted endeavor, and then cries out, "It is of no use to make further effort." Many men succeed because they never know when they are defeated.

GODFULNESS.

IF irreligion is fitly called godlessness, how can genuine religion better be described than as godfulness? And what is it to be full of God? A man is said to be full of a subject when he thinks of it so continually that it rises readily to his lips on all occasions. Are there many that are full of God in this sense? Do they connect him with all events? Do they find him suggested by everything that comes up? Does the

mind revert to him when released from other engrossments? Is he the one absorbing theme of thought, the dominant topic of conversation? Not many, it is to be feared, are thus filled with God. There is an experience which is sometimes designated as "full salvation;" but the words seem to have many meanings, and the fullness thus referred to is commonly but partial. There is great need that it be made much more complete. Only by constant effort and perpetual progress can the fullness be made commensurate with the ever-advancing requirements of the ever-increasing light and opportunity.

BEST METHODS OF INTENSIFYING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

To QUICKEN and strengthen, to deepen and broaden that blessed life to which we are introduced at the new birth, is the true Christian's chief desire. How can it best be done? Different minds will phrase it differently. Not all are equally benefited by the same means. Experiences greatly vary. Hence, no one answer, especially

if brief, can cover all the points that might well be suggested. But we offer the following, with the conviction that they will meet the need of most:

1. Prayer should certainly be put first. Whoever wants to be uncommonly good must pray with uncommon fervor and frequency. He must pray, not chiefly to get things, not as one begging for gifts, not with the idea that the treasures of God are thus to be forced from him. His prayer will be mainly communion, a meditative, assimilative process. It will be the steadfast, prolonged holding of his soul up to the great Sun of righteousness that upon him, as upon a sensitive plate, may be stamped the image divine. It can not be an instantaneous operation. Our souls are not sensitive enough for that. Our faith does not bring God near with sufficient vividness. It requires a longer exposure. But if we put ourselves frequently before the radiant face of the Master, and there tarry a good while, his image will be transferred to us more or less completely. Much prayer, day and night, with heart and soul; prayer of the quiet, ruminating sort; prayer that talks with God, that pours out its

longings for better things as into the ear of a most sympathizing friend; prayer that bursts forth at odd moments, that fills up the intervals of other occupations, that finds fitting vehicle in hymns and sacred songs and phrases from the Bible,—this surely must be, if large things are to be attained. He whose mind is set on such attainment will find prayer a privilege and a pleasure, not a task. It will be the delight of his days and the solace of his nights. Under its mighty stimulus progress will be rapid, the heights of Divine love that stretch on, peak after peak, will be steadily climbed, and from the mounts of Beulah Land the soul will look away across the sea where stand the heavenly mansions, and where the shining glory waits.

2. Read the best books. The Bible, of course, we never outgrow. It is not to be dispensed with at any stage of our Christian life. But there are other books that we can almost as little afford to neglect. To say to any one, "Read the Bible only," is to give him poor advice. The masters in spiritual things who, while they have drawn their nutriment largely from Scripture, have put it into forms more closely adapted to modern life,

who have applied all the powers of their being to ferreting out the secrets of holiness and happiness, who have communed with the Lord so closely that he has whispered to them things not generally known,—these fervent, foremost saints have put themselves on record for our instruction. They have left us their thoughts bound up in books. The conclusions that they reached after long agony, sweat of brain, ache of heart, toil of pen, we may freely enjoy. We may hold converse at our pleasure with these great spirits, and we should be very much to blame if we did not do it. These best books are not many, and they cost but little. There is nothing that can take their place. For instruction in the highest of all arts, that of right living, the greatest of all sciences, that of true godliness, we are not obliged to lay out thousands of dollars. A paltry sum will do. The wise man will not begrudge it, nor fail to give each day some little time to this most improving of pursuits.

3. If a person has a deep longing for God, a strong desire to be transformed into his likeness, he will pick his company to this end. He must do it if he would succeed. Associations of

the right sort when he talks, as well as when he reads, are essential. The living men and women that he moves among must, so far as he can manage it, be those who will help, not hinder, him in his quest for holy attainment. They whose hearts are set on Christlikeness will keep out of those voluntary societies whose pledges would bind them to be intimate with persons that are strangers to vital godliness. Light will not coalesce with darkness; or, if it does in one sense, the result will be diminished light. There are certain indulgences, not absolutely wicked, in defense of which a fair argument can be made, participation in which will kill the religious life and grieve the Holy Spirit. They minister to self-pleasing and self-seeking, instead of to the glory of God and the good of the weak. Hence they throw one out of touch with Jesus. Nothing pays better than the strict regulation of one's company. It were well to go far, if need be, to find one so genuinely religious as to act like a tonic to the soul. It is a grand thing to form a little circle, however small, for mutual help in this vital matter.

4. Besides unceasing prayer and the perusal

of the best books and the picking of one's company, with special reference to their ability and willingness to help us in the heavenly journey, there is one other thing not less important. It is the improvement of every opportunity for *self-sacrifice*. We must give Jesus, as often as possible, that which means the crucifying of the flesh, the mortifying of appetite and desire. Is there any better, more widely applicable, more easily-adjusted way of doing this than the adoption of the tithing-rule in the administration of our personal and family finances, the giving of at least one-tenth of our pecuniary means steadily to the special work of God? The reply usually made, "I can't afford it," is only another way of saying, "I do not love Christ enough to make some real sacrifice in his behalf." It is a very sad thing that so small a proportion of those who claim to belong to him, and to be making his will the rule of their lives, are able to endure this simple test of devotion. What would they do if the martyr fires were again burning and the block stood ready? Christ gives us now an easier test than he gave the saints of old—a tithe of our possessions instead of our heart's blood. But

nearly all put away the thought somewhat impatiently, and declare it is too much to give for him who gave for us his all. And so the blessing God waits to pour out is lost. It certainly is a shame, and a pity as well. When the pocketbook is placed on the altar of consecration, love will flame up in fullest measure, deepest impressions be made on those around us, and God's cause at home and abroad speed triumphantly on.

"TRAVEL, TRAVEL!"

DR. MARCUS WHITMAN, the missionary, who more than any other one man saved Oregon to the United States by his heroic winter ride amid extremest hardships and perils from the Pacific Coast to Washington, and then by leading back triumphantly a train of emigrant wagons over the untried passes of the Rockies, constantly urged along his sometimes lagging column on that fearful march with the words, "Travel, travel, travel! Nothing else will take you to the end of your journey; nothing is wise that does not help you along; nothing is good for you that gives a moment's delay."

A similar exhortation is pertinent to those who are traveling Zionward in the King's highway. In most cases their progress is far from being what it should be. They meddle with too many things that fail to help them along. They do not enough reflect that they are pilgrims, nor fix their mind with sufficient intensity on the end of the road. They rest in past experience, and are content with being a little better than the average. They are so much occupied with looking at their neighbors that they do not very much look at Christ, the model, and measure their progress by their approach to him. Nothing is really good that gives a moment's delay in this great work of life. Quite too many who even make high profession, and apparently think they are perfectly right, are only marking time. While they are so idly busy with self-congratulation, others of modester aspect have quite passed them by on the stretch, the home stretch, for complete Christlikeness.

“Burn, burn, O Love! within my heart
Burn fiercely night and day,
Till all the dross of earthly loves
Is burned and burned away.”

—FABER.

STOP THE LEAKS.

THE prudent householder will see to his roof in time before his ceilings and carpets are ruined. The thrifty financier will closely scan his outgoes, and curtail the small expenses of day by day, well aware that it is the many littles that make the much, and that his funds will speedily be drained away if he does not look sharply after minute matters. It is not the floods of ocean pouring over the bulwarks that sends the good ship to the bottom, but the little leaks.

Even so it is of primary importance to guard against leakage in spiritual strength and religious resources. A person at some revival time has gotten full of grace and fervor, love and zeal. If he only kept it all and went steadily on, how much permanent progress might he make! But how soon the leakage begins! At a dozen points, through lack of watchfulness, the love and grace speedily commence to ooze away. Some small excuse detains from the place of prayer; attention wanders from the sermon, and no profit is secured; uncharitable words are spoken; some

slight is brooded over; a doubtful gratification of the flesh is yielded to; the Bible is thrust aside, even on Sunday, for the secular newspaper. And so, in a multitude of ways which need not be further particularized, all of them slight and seemingly insignificant when taken separately, but mighty in combination, the waters of worldly conformity, the cold, deadly tides of spiritual indifference, steal in, and, if they do not wholly swamp the ship, so waterlog her that any progress is out of the question.

Surely it is the part of wisdom to stop the leaks. It may seem to require close, hard work, a vigilance that is irksome, a carefulness that wearies; but it pays. He who does it not will have no reason to be surprised when he discovers that he has lost all headway, and is settling down more and more into a state of spiritual wreck.

“Just to leave in His dear hand
Little things;
All we can not understand,
All that stings;
Just to let him take the care
Sorely pressing,
Finding all we let him bear
Changed to blessing.

THREE STAGES OF GROWTH.

IT has been noted that there are three stages of growth commonly discernible in the Christian consciousness concerning prayer; namely, prayer as a refuge in emergencies, prayer as a habit at appointed times, and prayer as a state of continuous living. This last stage—indicated in Scripture by such phrases as “Pray without ceasing,” “Praying always with all prayer and supplication”—is realized by comparatively few. But it is our only safety, as well as our highest delight and deepest peace. Since we are in continual peril from the manifold temptations on every side, we should be in continual prayer. Only this can correct the restlessness so readily fostered by the present age. Only this can bring power, for it gives us unbroken contact with Him who alone is mighty. The things which are done in a spirit of prayer are very sure to prosper. Both mental and moral health are inseparably linked with it. Let us pray more. Let us pray always.

“Beautiful lives are those that bless—
Silent rivers of happiness,
Whose hidden fountains but few may guess.”

THREE SNAGS.

THOSE who are striving after the highest Christian development need to have a care in three directions,—in their doctrinal statements, their emotional experiences, and their practical life. They will be tempted to put too much emphasis on particular forms of words and phrases of speech, to be very strenuous as to just such and such expressions, and very persistent that certain favorite terms shall receive recognition. They will be disposed, perhaps, to think that such and such emotions are essential, that a particular order of feeling must be invariably followed, and that, if other people's experience is not run in precisely the same mold as their own, something is wrong with it. They will also be in danger of laying inordinate stress on unimportant details of dress or other external matters, forgetting that in all these things there may be great diversities of operation under the guidance of the same Holy Spirit. If these three snags were more generally avoided by those who, with the best of intentions, are striving hard to lead the very noblest kind of a life, their success

would be more pronounced, and they would commend themselves more widely to the approval of the judicious. Godly living is an art that needs much study.

FEASTING ON THE WILL OF GOD.

TO SUBMIT to the will of God is one thing; to feast upon it is quite another. A heathen philosopher can do the former; not every Christian does the latter. But those who have once got a good taste of the sweetness of this kind of food find their appetite pretty well spoiled for inferior viands, and have an intense longing that all should share the banquet. The supply is limitless, and the flavor delicious. Nothing is so strengthening. Souls that are lean and weak find themselves in this sorry plight because the will of God disagrees with them, which is only another way of saying that they disagree with it. It is the true spiritual food, and if we can not take it, something must be seriously wrong with us, nor is there any hope of vital improvement till we set it right.

THE SCIENCE OF THE SAINTS.

WHILE there is occasionally one found who seems to have been taught of God in secret, and to owe very little to human instruction, it is very noticeable that nearly all the great saints of the past both applied their own minds with much diligence (minds, as a rule, of unusual caliber) to the things of God, and also largely availed themselves of the labors of those that had gone before. They confessed their indebtedness to others, and they did their best to increase, for those who should come after them, the stock of information and enlightenment. There has come thus to be what may fairly be called the science of the saints, a body of truth bearing on holy living, a collection of rules, methods, and principles, tested over and over again, and coming to us with all the weight of many generations or centuries of approval.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, in a brief space to give a summary or synopsis of this best of all sciences. But no one can have read extensively in this kind of literature with-

out being impressed by the fact that there are a few things which come up again and again for indorsement and emphasis on the part of those who have given closest examination to spiritual things, and have made most progress in them. For example, they say, in different forms of speech and with much iteration, that self-renunciation, self-abandonment, self-annihilation, is the key to the religious life; that only he who gives all gets all; that going down is the way to go up; that humbleness is holiness; that nothing but absolute surrender can produce absolute peace; and that the problem of problems is to keep one's consecration in all possible particulars exactly correspondent to one's ever-increasing light. And this certainly is a great truth, admitting of almost infinite expansion, illustration, and application. To get a firm grip on it for one's self, to follow out its multitudinous ramifications, to guard against extravagance of statement, to note its qualifying limitations, yet to hold unflinchingly to its righteous standard, is a task of no small magnitude. To accomplish it will require all the mind one has. Happily, we are not responsible for using what we have not.

But the more we use in this noblest of directions, the better we are likely to come out.

Another point on which devout writers are fully agreed is that nothing can take the place of recollectedness of spirit; nothing can excuse a distracted mind; nothing can be more essential than close attention to the presence of God. This inward stillness (which may be maintained in the midst of outward necessary bustle), this divine tranquillity of soul, which results from turning the thought away from secondary agencies and fixing it on the great First Cause, is an indispensable aid against the power of the tempter. If our best Friend is ever at our right hand, we shall not go wrong. If we behold him standing for our defense, we shall not care how many may be against us. If we deal directly with him in all the events that occur, we shall save ourselves a world of trouble. To make God great, and to make him immanent—to conceive of him as one not liable to be defeated in his plans, and as one who is not a mere superintendent at a distance, but an immediate participant or efficiency in every occurrence—is to make ourselves blissful if we are on his side.

Still again, the high authorities to which we refer lay much stress on the right regulation of the desires as being the key to contentment; on a constantly-increasing delicacy of conscience and keenness of moral discernment as an essential mark of constant growth; on greater fervency and frequency of intercessory prayer as a proof that we are loving our fellow-men more. These and other matters, too numerous here to enlarge upon, or even mention, have been profoundly investigated by some of the best minds God has made; they have left us their deliberate conclusions, the ripe results of lifelong thought, and we are warranted in affirming that we possess, as a consequence, a science of saintliness every way worthy to be studied. It may be said that it is all in the Bible, and so in one sense it is; it is there in the germ, just as all moral philosophy and all theology are there. But the fuller development of these truths, and their more exact adjustment to the details of modern life, is a very important work, a work not yet completed. No topic is more deserving of examination, none better repays it. "Zeal without knowledge is like haste to a man in the dark," or a man on the

wrong road. Zeal, like a fire, needs watching as well as feeding. Our Churches should, no doubt, have more zeal; but it is none the less true that they suffer much because not properly informed as to the best lines of Christian progress.

FEWER FAULTS.

WHAT is the best proof that a person has genuine piety? The vigor with which he takes up the difficult task of correcting his faults, removing as fast as possible all hindrances to usefulness, all remnants of selfishness. He in whom love to God and men is full and fervent will spare no pains to cut off excrescences and fill up deficiencies till a well-rounded, symmetrical character is the triumphant result. To be careless in this matter, satisfied with growth in directions where there is not much opposition, is to be convicted of having little real religion. Any one can develop along lines congenial and constitutional. The test comes when temperamental temptations are conquered and long-indulged habits reversed. This requires toil, and gives loud testimony to real earnestness. A great deal of

labor can be put in at this point without very much apparent result; but the steady, even though slow, approach toward the perfection of one's daily life speaks volumes as to the genuineness of the love which furnishes the motive power.

SLAVES, HIRELINGS, SONS.

God's people in the world are of three classes. Some are slaves, and serve him from fear. Others are hirelings, and serve him for wages. Still others, not so many, are sons, and serve him for love. It would be well for us each to ask ourselves whereabouts in this classification we belong. It is far better to serve him from fear than not to serve him at all. But the fear of the Lord is only the beginning of wisdom; there should be no stop there. They who have considerable regard to the wages, who are asking, like Peter, "Master, we have left all and followed thee; what shall we have?" are not to be ruled out as altogether mercenary and wholly destitute of true religion. Still it is clear that they have not reached the best place. They must press on, till it matters to them little or nothing whether

joy comes or sorrow, so they but see his face and have permission to rest in his arms. Then are they his dear children.

PERSONAL APPROPRIATION.

It is related of Mr. Joseph Mackey, some years ago publisher of the *Commercial Gazette* of New York, that, having a very large number of workmen in his employ, he had them print for his own individual use a complete copy of the Bible, differing from the ordinary one only in this, that wherever there was a general promise he made it particular by inserting his own name before it. For example, he made it read thus: "Joseph Mackey, ask and receive, that your joy may be full;" "Joseph Mackey, my grace is sufficient for thee;" "Joseph Mackey, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." We can well imagine that the Scriptures became a very different book to him when he read it in this way. And he really did not go beyond his privilege. All the obedient, believing disciples of Christ are fully authorized to appropriate to themselves personally the richest, largest words

of the grand legacy he has left them. Their only care should be to comply with the conditions which are always either expressed or implied, and then, flinging themselves boldly on the naked Word, rest there in perfect peace. Every one may and should write in his own name before the promises, though he can not print it, as did Joseph Mackey.

A SLACK WIRE.

A FEW years ago there was a serious accident on the Lachine Canal, near Montreal. The wire communicating with the engineer of a certain steamer that was passing through the canal had become slack. The officer in charge on deck pulled the wire to ring the bell in the engine-room and stop the steamer as she entered one of the locks. The wire being out of order, the bell did not ring, the steamer kept on at full speed, the lock gates were smashed by the collision, the waters were suddenly let out, and many vessels inside were greatly damaged. There was also an obstruction to business for several days at a crowded season of the year, and a great fleet

of upward and downward bound crafts were detained with much detriment to their cargoes. Indeed, the whole loss was estimated roughly at scarcely less than a million of dollars. And all from a slack wire!

The application is easy. Just as the officers of that ship made a great mistake when they were careless about that little medium of communication on which so much depended, so does that man make even a greater mistake who suffers the delicate line of communication between him and God to get out of order. The consequence is that the commands issued from above are not received or not heeded, and a headlong course into ruin is maintained. Some little apparently insignificant thing, some slight disobedience or willfulness is quite enough to interrupt the flow of guiding messages, and then the result in pain and loss, who can estimate? Keep in close touch with God. Let not the wire get slack.

“Only for Jesus! Lord, keep it ever
Sealed on the heart and engraved on the life!
Pulse of all gladness and nerve of endeavor,
Secret of rest and the strength of our strife.”

—MISS F. R. HAVERGAL.

LOCKING UP SPIRITUAL COIN.

IN times of financial uncertainty a great deal of material coin is shut away from circulation through fear for its safety. Such a course is not usually regarded by the wise as either personally profitable or adapted to the public good. Still less commendable is the habit of those who lock up behind closed lips that spiritual coin which might be of such priceless benefit to multitudes were it put in free circulation.

The old song has made us familiar with the thought that "Kind words can never die." Equally true is it that words of natural, wholesome piety live on forever. Why should they not be more generally spoken? Fervent praise for common blessings is no doubt felt less often than it should be; but how much oftener felt than uttered! The utterance would not only increase the feeling, but would stir the thankfulness of others. "Take the *name* of Jesus with you," is good advice. The more that matchless Name can sound forth from the mouths of those that love it, the better for the world. The little

daily discontents and fretful frictions that press so heavily on many hearts would more frequently be lifted were an upward turn given to the thought by some religious reflection fittingly and openly expressed in their hearing.

Our spiritual life is too much hidden behind a cloak of unseemly silence and stiff reserve. We act as though ashamed of emotion, if not indeed ashamed of the Savior. By the memories of blessing which have come to us from the holy words of others, and by our hope of being "confessed" one day before the throne of God, let us not fail to enter these small doors of usefulness that swing open at our side moment by moment; let us not fail to send forth on their mission of mercy the gold and silver coins of right words, wherever minted, that shall make many a poor soul rich.

"He was better to me than all my hopes,
He was better than all my fears;
He made a bridge of my broken works,
And a rainbow of my tears.
The billows that guarded my seagirt path
Carried my Lord on their crest;
When I dwell on the days of my wilderness march,
I can lean on his love for the rest."

—ANNA SHIPTON.

SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

THERE are many unequivocal evidences that the soul is in a healthy condition, and a considerable variety of statement on this matter is undoubtedly possible. Hence, without claiming that the tokens which follow are exhaustive, or even necessarily the absolute best, we submit them as helpful to a right estimation of our spiritual gains.

1. *A growing sense of God.* Of the wicked the psalmist says (x, 4), "God is not in all his thoughts;" that is, God is nothing to him, not a single one of his thoughts is directed toward the unseen Majesty. Concerning one at the furthest remove from this, a friend bore testimony some years ago that "the greatest force in the life of George Bowen, the white saint of India, was the complete and permanent realization of the actual, personal presence of the Savior, a vivid sense of his intimate nearness, as one to be spoken to and walked with; this mental habit grew by cultivation to be a great life power with him." Between these two extremes—God in no thought, God in all thoughts

—lie all conceivable shades of difference. And scarce any test of our advancement toward perfect purity is fitter or closer than this: How constantly, how clearly do I see God? He who walks before him, in the fullest meaning of the words, without cessation or obscuration, is properly called perfect. That realized presence constitutes heaven. And the faith which makes the presence real, unveiling the invisible, penetrating the many thick disguises in which, to try us, he wraps himself, is the formative principle of the Christian life, the victory which overcomes whatever stands in the way of continual advance. According to our faith is our standing. At this point, therefore, should be careful examination, and we should not be satisfied unless we can give an unhesitating affirmative answer to the inquiry, Do I perceive God in all the events of daily life, in his Word and his works, in providence and in nature, more quickly and joyfully than I used to do?

2. *Warmer devotion to Christ.* We are all aware what a great difference there is among Christians in this particular. While some have the closest personal friendship for the Savior,

with others there is very little of this feeling. To the latter he is simply a great teacher, a spotless example, a martyr to the truth, a marvelous religious leader who has deserved wondrously well of the world. Their individual obligation to him is of a shadowy sort, and scarcely other than that which loosely binds them to any hero or philosopher whose life they admire and whose words have thrilled them. Not so with the devotee. It is not admiration simply with him, but adoration. He can find no terms of endearment strong enough to express his love. Words altogether fail, nor do ordinary deeds suffice. He longs for something quite out of the common to show what he feels. He understands how it was with Mary of Bethany when she had to break the flask of alabaster. Commandments are not called for. The slightest wish of Jesus, however indicated, is to him the strongest of laws. He would gladly die the worst of deaths to give him the least of pleasures. Such language may not find yet full echo in our hearts, and Faber's impassioned verse may seem to us overwrought. But can we comprehend it better than once we did? Is this attitude of the hot lovers of the Lord more in-

telligible to us than it used to be? Have we more of a response to it in our soul? If so, there has been growth.

3. *Lessened attachment to the world.* This item perhaps hardly needs statement, since it is really contained in the matter just mentioned. The spirit of the world and the spirit of Jesus are directly contrary the one to the other. He who is hot toward Jesus will be cold toward the world, and *vice versa*. This is the reason for the clear command, "Come out and be separate." Between two such opposing forces there must be a deliberate and final choice. Both can not be supreme in the soul. Therefore, in proportion as this waxes, that must wane. The two tests are practically identical. But it is well to apply both, since each checks the other, and at the mouth of two witnesses conviction is confirmed. How is it, then, with us as to worldly pleasures? How is it as to the maxims most current in the marts of trade? Do we find that our tastes have undergone a revolution, that our ideas are not what they were in other days? If so, we may well be of good courage. Perhaps the alteration in these points is not yet as complete as we be-

lieve it should be, judging from the best models; but if we are plainly on the way to these heights of excellence, if the world—its standards, its opinions, its attractions—is far less to us than formerly, we are on the upgrade, and may heartily thank God.

4. *Greater unselfishness.* This, too, may be fairly reckoned a part of increased Christlikeness. Love to others will grow with love to Jesus. He who gets near to him will get near to the suffering and the toiling masses on whom the Savior looked with such compassion, and he will be unable to spend so largely on himself. Self will no longer be the center of his efforts, the shrine of his worship, the matter of largest importance. To do good to those most needy will seem to him of more consequence than ministering to his own enhanced comfort. He will find his deepest joys in enlarged spheres of usefulness. He will think more and more of the work to be done, less and less of added prominence or emoluments for the worker. Thus a peculiar beauty, as well as a peculiar delight—the beauty of the Lord who gives unceasingly, and the delight of disinterested beneficence—will attach themselves

very firmly to him, and he will know here on earth much of the best bliss of heaven.

5. *Increased power to overcome temptation.* The test of temptation is extremely practical, and more readily applied perhaps than any other; for temptations come all the while, and our treatment of them greatly varies. There are times when we are distinctly conscious that the evil one has not touched us; that he has met only fierce and prompt repulsion; that he has been utterly foiled. There are other times when we are by no means so sure but that he has gained some slight advantage, found admission for a season at some unguarded point, prevailed in a small degree at least to disturb our purity or peace. In proportion to the readiness with which we apprehend his presence, however speciously cloaked, and the strength with which we say no to his most plausible or potential allurements, our progress toward perfect holiness is accurately measured. We ought to be getting each week better and better acquainted with his devices, and understanding more fully how to overcome. We ought also to be acquiring a larger portion of strength in the superior ranges of our being, the

lower appetites and passions subsiding more and more to the place of complete subordination originally designed for them; thus the true equilibrium being restored, and the disorder or distortion produced by sin rectified, the tempter loses his advantage, and it becomes natural to do right. Not yet probably do any of us find this state fully attained. But are we drawing daily nearer? If not, something is wrong.

6. *A keener interest in heaven.* This seems to us a legitimate sign of progress. The worldling cares nothing for that better country, for it holds naught on which his heart is set. But they who are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" are seeking the "city which hath foundations," and which God hath especially prepared for them. They have thought so much about it that they see it in vision, their faith makes it real. Their Savior is there plainly revealed, as here he can not be, and the spirits of the just made perfect reign there in cloudless day, sin gone, death conquered, purity and peace without end. It is the center of all attraction to the saint, his eternal home, his incomparable reward. They who are young in the Christian life, who are babes, still

in part carnal, do not dwell much on the prospect of heaven. The earth has still a good deal of attraction for them, and is very vivid in their eyes. But as they gradually shake off its ties, and draw nearer in time as well as in fitness to the future world, the latter lays hold of them, and gravitation begins to pull that way. Happy they who are homesick for heaven. In due time they shall arrive. Meanwhile let them cultivate the desires that stretch upward, and rejoice as they find their wishes more and more tending that way.

WALKING BEFORE GOD.

How SHALL we walk before God? With habitual *reverence*, counting every place holy ground, and looking for visible manifestations of his presence at all times. With habitual *vigilance*, wakeful, watchful, earnest, both in private and public, remembering what enemies are round about us, as well as who it is that seeth us with all-searching eye. With habitual *gladness*, joying in the loveliness of his character, the freedom of access he permits, the abounding grace he be-

stows, the countless gifts of his hand, and the bliss of his presence. With habitual *consecration*, the whole heart devoted to him, the whole life a perpetual sacrifice. Surely this is the true, normal, Christian life. He who is not pursuing it can not be fully pleasing in His holy sight.

WORDLESS COMMUNION.

Is it not true that the length of the discourse indicates the distance of thought between the speaker and the hearer? That is to say, in proportion to the perfectness of the understanding between two friends, words of explanation are not needed; though words of pleasant fellowship will, of course, still be in order, and brief consultations will be called for. This explains why some advanced Christians find themselves spending less time than formerly in formal or stated prayer. As they draw nearer heaven in point of progress, they find heaven's special occupation, praise, more congenial to them than petition. Their intercourse with God is continual. So perfect is their understanding with him that thought passes freely, and but few words

are needful. Their wills are in such complete harmony with his that they feel no wish to plead for that which it is not his pleasure to bestow. The late William Arnot tells us, in his diary, that, as he grew older, he grew more brief and simple in his closet devotions. He pithily says, "I suppose there are really two kinds of brevity in prayer—one because you are *far off*, and one because you are *far in*." So no one can judge for another as to precisely how much time that other needs to spend on his knees. Nor can we safely take the example of any one else as an absolute guide in our own case. Many things need to be considered—our household duties, our business engagements, our special perplexities, our mastery of perpetual prayer. We are not bound always to spend just so much time in the exercise; nor need we write ourselves down delinquent if we can not pass whole hours in special supplication, like some one we have read about. There will come occasions in the lives of all for long tarrying before God. But when such a proceeding meets no real demand of our spiritual nature, we need not feel obligated to it. "Strength in prayer is better than length in prayer."

LOVING MEN.

It is not enough for ministers, or lay laborers, to have their hearts in their work; they must have their hearts in the people. The distinction is not a mere verbal or idle one. It touches that which is fundamental to the best success. The work may interest us because it is ours, and we are to be personally gainers by doing it well. But unless the people really interest us, we can not effectively reach their hearts. To persuade men we must love them. Then all else readily follows.

There is the same vital difference between seeking to please people and seeking to give them pleasure; the former has a touch of selfishness in it, from which the latter is free. It is one thing for a Sunday-school teacher to occupy the time, and another thing to occupy the scholars. A minister may be a good sermonizer, and yet by no means a good preacher of the gospel; he who has a mind to work may accomplish the one, but only he who has a heart to love can effect the other.

CHRISTIAN RECREATION.

THE two words belong together. The Christian not only may, but must, have suitable recreation. It is when he takes it in the way of the world rather than in the way of the Lord that he gets into trouble. There are certain things which he can not do, certain places where he can not go, without harm to his spiritual life and loss of religious influence. The world thoroughly understands that religion demands a difference in the life, and that the choice of a man's pleasures is an excellent indication of his character, far better than any amount of profession. They will never respect a man who calls himself a follower of Christ and refuses to deny himself those diversions where the world gives the law, where prayer would be manifestly out of place, and the pleasures of the passing hour are exclusively considered. Can such a man respect himself?

Recreation is good when it recreates; when it refreshes mind and body; when it can be taken without conscious relaxation of the bonds of Christian obligation; when it comes plainly in

as an essential part of the service of God, not making undue draughts on either time or money, or leading into dangerous associations or encouraging pernicious tendencies. It is evil when it violates any of these requirements. There is more to be thought of in this matter, more at stake, than many, especially in youthful years, are apt to consider. Circumstances make a great difference. Some things are permissible in one place, but not in another. Some are harmful to one person, but not to another. The viewpoint changes in different generations and different circles of society.

But it is always wrong to do those things which we have good reason to feel would not be pleasing to Christ, about which we at least have serious doubts whether he would approve, for it is our duty always to study his example and live in close communion with him. It is always wrong to do those things which would hinder our spiritual development or injure our religious life. It is far better to miss here and there a possibly permitted pleasure than to cripple our Christian growth or bring a cloud over the sky of our communion with him whom our soul supremely de-

sires and adores. It is always wrong to do those things which would detract from our Christian influence and become a stumbling-block in the path of the weak,—those things which naturally lead, and in thousands of cases have led, to ways of dissipation, frivolity, and forgetfulness of God.

Why should we trifle with these dangers, or try how much poison we can eat without being killed? There is true, healthful, Christian recreation, wherein the bow can be unbent, and we can have respite from toil within the limits of Christian decorum, and without any real cessation of Christian work. Such only can be taken with real satisfaction or with healthful results in the long run. Each for himself must decide what they are and where he can find them. Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth, and still more blessed he that can so order his conduct as not to be condemned by the fair-minded portion of “those that are without,” and who are ever watching most closely to find something in the lives of Church members that will serve to neutralize the reproach which their consistent example ever gives.



RELIGIOUS WOOL-GATHERING.

RELIGIOUS wool-gathering is one thing, and practical religious progress is quite another. It is easy to indulge the imagination in picturing heights of goodness we would like to attain and painting high ideals. It is not easy to take, one after another, the precise steps that lie between us and that ideal. We must not only want great goodness, we must want it enough to get it. Idle wishes are both foolish and useless. Our desire for a thing is genuine when we put forth the effort necessary to acquire it. He who sings "Nearer, my God, to thee," and then refuses the cross which alone will lift him, has deceived himself with an empty word. If we really want to be better, we will be. There is nothing to hinder the resolute soul. Very many impose upon themselves with some cant form of speech whose meaning they have not stopped to examine. All things are possible to him who thinks, feels, believes, and acts.

"Not in the clamor of the crowded street,
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves are triumph and defeat."

—LONGFELLOW.

IS THE LINE CLEAR?

WHEN there is some business of great urgency, some need for swiftest communication between two points, the line is cleared from end to end, and the train that is charged with the imperative message has absolute right of way. Thus it was when Mrs. Garfield was summoned to her husband's death-bed. Thus it is when some great general, or some picked body of troops, is called to the place of imminent National peril. The right of way belongs to the thing that for the moment is of supreme importance. But there is one thing that at all moments is of supreme importance to the truly Christian heart; it is the will of God. This must always have the right of way. All other things whatsoever, no matter how dear to the natural man, must stand aside and make room when that appears. Otherwise there will be a collision fraught with much pain and loss. The will of God can not stop to give place to aught else. It is the only thing really important, or valuable, or desirable in the whole universe. The loyal soul will be ever on the

watch to detect the first signs of its approach, and to see that it has the line clear for unobstructed progress.

LOVE TO JESUS—HOW MUCH?

THERE is such a thing as deep, burning, all-consuming love to the Savior. Not all, even of the very good, have it. The goodness of many proceeds from other motives, excellent in their way, but not imparting the same flavor. Love-inspired piety is the best, the sweetest, least easily tired, most effective with others. How can this strong affection be procured? Only by a due combination of the meditative and the active methods. Neither alone will give it. We shall love Jesus in proportion as we become closely acquainted with him through prolonged study; and also in proportion as we toil and suffer in his behalf. Love will prompt both to contemplation and sacrifice, and will be greatly deepened thereby. It is good to apply tests to ourselves as to how much we love him. Little services may be inspired by large devotion; and the largest labor will not be withheld if the beloved can thus

be better pleased. Whatever destroys self makes place for love. The latter's faintness is due mainly to the former's strength.

HOLINESS TAKES TIME.

THERE is a deep truth beneath the line of the familiar hymn which counsels us to "Take time to be holy." A holy life is the result of deliberate effort and ceaseless watching. It does not come into maturity unless we take time for its culture. It is this very sphere of the religious life that the modern business stress invades with such disaster. We are busy, and we simply do not take time to be holy. It takes more real strength to pray than it does to perform physical toil. The reason why people do not pray when they are tired is because they can not; their strength is exhausted. It takes vital force to study the Bible and to reflect on religious themes. And yet this is generally reserved to the close of the day, when we are too much exhausted for the task. And so it soon falls into disuse.

We may as well recognize, therefore, at the

beginning that it takes strength and time to attain a holy life. It is a matter of downright and persistent earnestness. It is true that a holy life is the result also of relationship and of absorption. Both the active struggle and the passive, receptive mood are necessary. It is the first of these that we tend most to neglect. But we must arouse ourselves; holiness means struggle; holiness takes time.

LOVE DEVELOPED BY EXPRESSION.

It is a good rule to let no day pass in which we do not do something distinctly in Jesus's name, for his sake, as his representative. There is a difference between doing a thing because it is right and doing the same thing out of love to the blessed Lord. The latter motive puts a sweetness into the action that transfigures it. Of priceless worth is the acquirement of this habit; and it is not to be gained easily or at once. Hence we say begin by resolving to do at least one thing a day in this manner. See how very much of love can be put forth in it and expressed by

it. Thus will love grow; and thus the custom will be confirmed until gradually it shall become easy and cover the whole life.

THE SECRET OF SAINTLINESS.

FLETCHER'S pre-eminence in piety among the fathers and founders of Methodism has been universally acknowledged. Wise is it, then, for us to note some of the steps by which he reached those heights of grace so seldom trod. There is still in existence a little book, which has been held in safe and reverent keeping for more than a century past, and is still as he left it. Its pages are worn by his touch. It was his closet companion, written by his own hand. With its meditations and rules he nourished his soul in secret. With its spiritual exercises and disciplinary regulations, its tests and standards of self-examination, he sought to perfect himself in the love of God and in the minutest details of character and conduct. One feels, as he looks into this little manual of devotion which was so dear to the saint, that he is almost watching the process

by which that saintliness was evolved. The lovely growth of goodness had at its root the patient discipline here outlined and portrayed. Here is the workshop from which the finished product was at last brought forth. Here is revealed much of the way in which Fletcher's inmost life—a life that for a generation was a marvel to all beholders—was carefully cultivated.

This manual—the most vital and precious of all the Fletcher relics, because disclosing more directly than any other the processes of his interior life, the spirit and method of his daily devotions—is a small, square book, strongly bound in leather, containing about two hundred closely-written pages. It was prepared when he was about twenty-seven years of age, and contains topically-arranged passages of Scripture, selections from Charles Wesley's hymns, and a great variety of resolutions, meditations, and precepts, written in Greek, Latin, French, and English. A few extracts will give a taste of the contents:

“Do not surrender thyself to any joy.”

“Receive afflictions as the best guides to perfection.”

“Remember always the presence of God.”

“Renounce thyself in all that can hinder thy union with God.”

“Rejoice always in the will of God.”

“Beware of relaxing and of impatience.”

“Always speak gently.”

On such points as these he trained himself, and with conspicuous success, for his whole heart was in it; no common degrees of grace could satisfy his desire. It was in this way he attained that superlative degree of excellence which led Wesley and all others who knew him most intimately to declare that no age or country had produced a man more thoroughly consecrated in heart and life. The way is still open. Why should we not follow it? There is no short cut, no royal road, to this sort of attainment. Nothing but the most painstaking spiritual culture will produce these finished effects. He who is willing to take the steps can reach the results. Let there be more of these little books written out. Each must write one for himself.

“Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime;
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.”

—J. R. LOWELL.

“FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE.”

THERE is great power and sweetness in this expression which occurs so frequently in the Bible. It gives a glimpse of the spontaneous goodness of God. It is out of the great fullness of his loving heart, because he is intrinsically kind, that he does kind things; not because he is persuaded into it, or feels that he must, but because he longs to. It is for his own nature’s sake, so noble and rich and beautiful is it. As when a musician sits down to an instrument, not that he may please a listening throng, but that he may pour forth his own soul in this way most natural to him, so God, because of what he is, for his own sake, to satisfy himself, is perpetually pouring out benefits upon the unthankful and the evil, looking for nothing again. Are we truly his children? Then this same delightful impulse will rule our breast, this same beautiful bird of love will sing most sweetly within our soul.

“How wretched is the man, with honors crowned,
Who, having not the one thing needful found,
Dies, known to all, but to himself unknown!”

—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

CRAB-TREE CHRISTIANS.

SOME there are, presumably on the way to heaven, and whom we shall perhaps be happy to associate with there, that we are very glad to get rid of from the earth. There is no complaint when they die. Everybody is willing, and more than willing, that they should be promoted, transferred to the better land. They have a vast amount of vinegar mixed with their disposition. They conceive it to be their duty to set their faces like a flint against about everything that goes on in this degenerate age. Nothing suits them in Church or State. They can not defend religion without getting into a rage. They are so sour that people's teeth are set on edge at the very sight of them. How sadly they misrepresent and dishonor the Master at the very time they claim to be about the only ones that know him! Whatever else the Christian lacks, sweet reasonableness and winsomeness must not be wanting. However cantankerous the natural disposition, there is ample provision for its change into something good to live with.

FOUR WAYS WITH TROUBLE.

As to trouble, men are four. Number one is overwhelmed, goes down beneath the waves, and rises not again. Number two just manages to keep his head above water; but what a time he has of it! how loud and strong his lamentations! what a pitiful object! Number three swims easily out and does not mind it much; he gets wet, but he is a philosopher, and soon dries himself, making no fuss about it nor coming to any harm. Number four feels the force of the flood as much as the other three, but he is so encased in rubber that the stream only tosses him forward on his way, and he exults at the strange means God has taken to promote his progress. Defeat, devastation, peace, triumph—which will we have? The Almighty is able to make his children victorious over all their trials, turning these into means of grace for which hearty thanks can most fitly be given. It is possible not merely to bear them with patience and resignation, but to exult at the glorious results therein wrought.

BOTTLE, WELL, RIVER.

IT has been suggested that these three words quite aptly designate three classes of Christians. There are those who seem to have but "a bottle of water," such as Abraham gave to Hagar when she wandered in the wilderness and was much distressed. There are those whose eyes have been opened to see the "well of water," and in whom the water has "become," as Christ says, "a well springing up." Happy they who possess this unfailing fountain to supply their needs! But there is yet something more, even that which shall overpass all local bounds, and bear forth gladness far and wide, refreshing, vivifying, fructifying. For Jesus says, again, that from the believer "shall flow rivers of living water," by which he referred to the Spirit when in his largest, fullest abundance he has taken the most complete possession of the soul. The Spirit-filled life will speedily make itself felt. The important question is how far our family, our neighborhood, our Church, are being refreshed by us. Where are the "rivers of living water" that we should be giving forth?

THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

NOTHING can be of greater practical importance to every Christian than the constant realization of the Divine Presence. It is worth every effort. It is, as much as any one thing can be, the key to the position, the guarantee of a sacred life. An increasing appreciation of this truth is shown in the large emphasis which, for a few years past, has been put upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Is not this simply another form of the same fact? The Holy Spirit is the present God, the God who operates most immediately and directly upon the human heart, the God of the present dispensation or age. Faith also—what is that but the sense of God's presence, the realization of unseen things, the close touch with the eternal, the apprehension of Deity? Hence to say of a person he is "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," is only another way of saying that he keeps God ever before his eyes; God is at his right hand, so that he is not moved by mundane things. In that Presence is fullness of joy, completeness of liberty, abundance of rest.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

LOVE begets love. Kindness is won by kindness. It is very foolish for us to complain that nobody cares for us; such complaint is self-impachment. The proper inference from it is that we have not cared much for others. Certainly, in nine cases out of ten, people are themselves to blame when they are not well treated. This is a matter mostly in our own hands. As a rule we get all the attention and courtesy and consideration that we in any way deserve. If any one claims otherwise, the burden of proof is on him, and he will find it a difficult task to persuade the impartial, unsympathetic public that he has been harshly used.

We wait for others to love us, and seek us, and begin to be good to us, when there is really no sufficient reason for them to begin. Unselfishness on our part is lacking, yet we have much to say about the selfishness of others. We count it extremely hard when we enter a new place that folks do not call on us or welcome us, yet we have never been in the habit of taking any pains about strangers. If we do not find sun-

shine where we go, it is chiefly because we do not carry it with us. If men do not smile at our coming, it is because there is no smile on our face. People can have love who earnestly desire it and really deserve it.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS FOR SPIRITUAL MINDS.

EVERYTHING which befalls us comes from God for our good; therefore, whatever comes, keep on smiling.

Disquiet, discouragement, and disappointment spring from self, and are displeasing to God; therefore, discard them.

It is well to look to the littles; what to many seem unprofitable niceties of conduct become important to the soul that covets the closest possible walk with God.

The mind of Christ was to do the will of God; hence to be armed with that mind is to be supremely devoted to that will.

The man who walks by faith takes no strolls through the land of fretfulness.

To be humble is to be thankful, for small

mercies will be greatly prized; to be thankful is to be happy, for warm gratitude and a cold, lumpish heart go not together; to be happy is what all men seek for, most of them in vain; therefore, take low views of your own claims and merits.

God's faithfulness can always be counted on; we may be quite sure that we can trust him.

Contentment is better than riches. Instead of striving so hard, therefore, to be rich, learn to be contented; learn, that is, to know God; he that knows him will love to obey him and will be satisfied with his arrangements.

The only thing anywhere desirable or valuable is God's will, and that comes to us every moment, saying, "Wilt thou be wise and accept me, or wilt thou be a fool and reject me?"

Entire Christlikeness is the only standard which the true Christian can set before him, and, although he may not hope to reach it in this life, he must steadily approximate it.

Unregulated, inordinate, self-centered, desires furnish the groundwork for all our temptations; to desire only God and what he chooses to give is the only path to peace.

True faith is free from fanaticism, true hope from hallucination, and true love from the laxity that is careless as to righteousness.

Whether we are known or unknown, prominent or obscure, useful on a large scale or a small, is God's affair; faithfulness to opportunity and duty is our part.

If the will of God is to us a rack or a prison-house, instead of being a home and a place of rest, we do not yet really know what true religion is.

Since the measure of our love to others is the measure of our power to do them good, or more nearly so than anything else, we must cultivate and increase this love by all means within our reach.

Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly; therefore, our troubles must depart when our wills are in line with God's, for we shall do his behests with cheerfulness.

That religion resides in the will rather than in the emotions can not be too often reiterated; to watch our choices is more important than to watch our feelings.

The only way to be happy, in spite of the

sad facts around us, is to believe thoroughly that God knows what he is about, and that eternal glory is being worked out by temporal gloom.

The Divine Father permits no evil to touch his children, except it be necessary for the production of some greater good, and that can not properly be called an evil; hence, complaint at any occurrence is a manifest sign of egregious folly.

He who has none to please but Jesus, whom he supremely loves, is the truly independent man.

If faith is to us victory, then we can count every foe, whether world, flesh, or devil, as already conquered by Christ; and we, secure in him, have only to repel the assaults made upon our position.

God's assisting blows—his afflictive providences—are indispensable to our complete separation from creature trust.

Anxiety always means lack of trust; by this test, am *I* trusting?

Contradiction and disputation are rarely of the Lord; they are dangerous disturbers of peace; a calm statement of truth as we see it, or a humble inquiry after light as some one else sees

it, is always in order; more than this cometh of evil.

Whoever is much concerned as to what "they say" puts his peace of mind at the disposal of gossips and fools.

We belong to Jesus, and he belongs to us; that is sufficient cause for perpetual hallelujahs.

To cultivate ejaculatory prayer by various devices, and with unmeasured persistence, is one of the best means for increasing our fellowship with the Father; so is the habit of singing devout songs when we are alone.

Communion with Jesus over common things gives a reality and a gladness to daily life that nothing else can.

He who does not talk about Jesus simply, naturally, lovingly, wherever there is any chance that it will be understood, may well question whether he loves his Lord as much as he ought, and may be quite certain that he has missed many opportunities of doing much good.

Not every one knows that true happiness comes from decreasing our wants, rather than adding to our possessions; it is as easy to increase the value of the fraction of life by lessen-

ing the denominator as by augmenting the numerator.

Shun shams and shibboleths. A genuine man longs to get at the truth of things in the most direct manner. It is senseless to drone over a set of empty phrases that have no real thought behind them, simply because they once contained a meaning and are now strictly orthodox. Let a man speak his mind in the clearest, simplest terms he can command, and fearlessly forswear the outworn absurdities and inanities of bygone ages. Have done with cant.

It is as foolish to try to trust God as it is to try to breathe. It is impossible to distrust him when we really know him. Hence the thing is to try to know him, and the rest will follow. If a person finds difficulty about trusting, it is a sure proof that he is not in right relationship with God; that he has no proper apprehension of his nature. Let him give up his sin and self-will, and there will be no further trouble.

There should be perpetual progress in purity, according to the expressive figure of Paul, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same

image from glory to glory." Let the transformation go on without stopping.

Indifference is either contemptible or sublime, according to the motives from which it proceeds and the objects it covers. It has the former character when it arises from indolence of mind or body; also when it refers to things of highest importance. But it is sublime when it springs from spiritual-mindedness and is exercised concerning matters which, though great in the world's estimation, are really of no true value.

Religion must be a business; every true Christian does what he ought whether he likes it or not, just as a genuine business man does what he can, or what he finds profitable, not simply what he likes.

Be ingenious in making excuses for others, cultivating kind thoughts about them, and giving them credit for the best motives; but call yourself to a strict account for all departures from the perfect way, remembering that, where so much is given, much will be required.

Give at least as much thought to the positive as to the negative side of the Christian life; to the acquisition of virtue as to deliverance from

vice; to being filled with the Spirit as to being freed from sin; the former is the quickest path to the latter.

Never take offense; it is a greater sin than to give it, and is a clear manifestation of pride; be not suspicious or sensitive; keep always in good humor, believing that you are loved and honored as much as you deserve.

Not to be vexed with one's self, or anxious about spiritual progress, or troubled at occasional defeats, and yet to be unweariedly pressing on with a cheerful, immovable determination to gain the loftiest heights, is true wisdom.

He is truly humble who is perfectly willing to be rated precisely as he deserves, who is sober-minded, with a calm, temperate, dispassionate measurement of his own powers.

To push aside the honors and emoluments of the world, accepting cheerfully the painful, difficult things that have been laid upon us as duties, glad to do and not at all solicitous about having credit for the thing done, is the mark of a noble mind.

Impatience is not a thing to be trifled with; its roots go deep, it involves a want of submission

to God and a lack of love to others; hence, every increase of brotherly affection or devotion to the Divine will shows itself necessarily in greater patience. Patience is the opposite of intolerance, of complaint, and of hurry; it may be applied to opinions, to pains, and to performances. Not until we are perfect and entire, wanting nothing, is this grace perfected.

It is nobler to turn to God in the hour of joy than in the hour of sorrow; but the perfect man can not really be said to turn to God ever, because he never turns from him, but remains perpetually in his presence, seeing his hand in everything, and finding in all a cause for gratitude and delight.

Nothing is of such consequence or such comprehensiveness as love; nothing is so strong, so sweet, so full of power and peace; it magnifies the smallest gift, and dignifies the most insignificant task; it conquers the most obdurate, and binds together the most dissimilar. Be it then our chief business to love more fully, more constantly, more widely, more deeply.

Being must precede doing; a single word spoken, a single deed done in the name—that is,

in the very spirit—of the Lord Jesus, by a soul in constant communion with him, is worth, for spiritual results, a thousand words and deeds not thus inspired.

To be thoroughgoing, whole-hearted, out-and-out in our piety, to be absolutely depended on, never known to compromise with evil or make conditions in the service of God, faltering not in allegiance, found ever in the forefront of duty, giving God the benefit of the doubt, faithful, stanch, steadfast, loyal, would not be considered a very high state of grace, but for the sad fact that so few continuously live in it.

To please men is not so important as to profit them. To please men in general is less important than to please good men. To please men of any kind must always be subordinate to pleasing God.

No Christian should leave his chamber in the morning without a formal renewal of his covenant with Jesus, and a fresh determination to spend the day wholly with God. Let him spend a few moments, at least, planning how he can lift up Christ and put down self more effectually than ever before.

We should dare to seem as good as we are, as well as dread to be accounted better than we are. Courage is needed for the one no less than genuine humility for the other. Our example must be made to tell for as much as possible.

Be pliable where no principle is involved. Yield readily to the wishes of others in regard to the little arrangements of daily life. If we are snappish and obstinate and disagreeable and domineering, our prayer-meeting testimonies as to perfect love will be a laughing-stock to those who know us.

There should be more specialization in favor of spiritualization. Other things must be sacrificed that the one thing, closest fellowship with God, may have unobstructed right of way.

There is no Bible passage which says "Groan in the Lord always," and yet we should suppose so from the way in which some people live, esteeming it apparently a sacred duty to be gloomy and counting it presumption to be glad. There is certainly a more excellent way.

When Christians meet, they should, much oftener than they do, ask after each other's spiritual health and experience in divine things; the

result would be great refreshment of soul and enlargement of heart.

To acquiesce in things disagreeable, to pocket affronts, to be smilingly unconscious of slights, to be blind of one eye and deaf in one ear, is the only path to permanent peace in this wearisome world.

Precipitation and agitation, disquiet and disturbance, do not sit well on the child of God; they suggest an over-fondness for one's own way; they smack of artfulness. A sweet tranquillity, an atmosphere of patience and gentleness, is much more becoming.

The Christian must be a pipe, open at both ends, to receive from Christ and to give forth to the world. It is his business to pass on the quickening draught to the thirsty lips that wait for it; in other words, to run and tell every good thing that he hears from God.

There is no conflict between contentment and aspiration. The former does not mean indolence or indifference. The latter does not mean worry, or fidget, or fuss. The former has reference chiefly to what we have, the latter to what we are.

Sobriety, in the Bible sense, does not mean

stupidity or dullness. It is opposed to levity rather than to vivacity. There is nothing incompatible between sober-mindedness and cheerfulness or rejoicing evermore.

Failure of the most absolute kind is his who deliberately turns his back on a duty clearly shown, or lowers his standard that he may not be inconvenienced by its strictness.

Few things are at once so manifestly foolish and so plainly sinful as indulgence in that painful uneasiness or disturbance of mind with reference to something that we wish or fear, which goes by the name of anxiety. Proper forethought and prudent planning have no necessary connection with worry.

It is not a good sign when about all our intercourse with God is that of beggars for personal favors. To employ ten minutes in talking with God about our own affairs, and one minute or less to the interests of all the world beside, is a kind of selfishness that does not comport with great nearness to Jesus.

There is a danger of prematurely concluding that the crucifixion of self is complete, and hence needs no more attention. Very few, if any, are

justified in assuming that, for them, the painful process can be carried no further.

Being less annoyed at the defects of others is one of the best proofs that we are approaching freedom from defects ourselves.

To think about people lovingly is a necessary prelude to those little acts of kindness which, when scattered through the day, make it so bright and beautiful. We do not look ahead and plan enough about these things.

“I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air:
I only know I can not drift
Beyond His love and care.”

—WHITTIER.

"I am glad to think
I am not bound to make the world go right,
But only to discover and to do,
With cheerful heart, the work that God appoints.
I will trust in him
That he can hold his own; and I will take
His will above the work he sendeth me
To be my chiefest good."

—JEAN INGELOW.

"Forenoon and afternoon and night. Forenoon
And afternoon and night. Forenoon, and—what!
The empty song repeats itself. No more?
Yes, that is Life: make this forenoon sublime,
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,
And Time is conquered, and thy crown is won."
—E. R. SILL.

"In a service which Thy love appoints,
There are no bonds for me,
For my secret heart has learned the truth
Which makes Thy children free,
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty."

—MISS WARING.

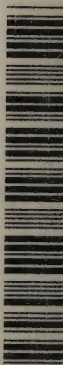
"There are in the loud-stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime,
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart;
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."
—KEBLE.

1. Discouragement arises from our ineffectiveness
2. — arises from inactivity
3. — — from unkind criticism
4. — — — the greatness of our spiritual
5. — — — our failing to draw out God's
6. — — — unbelief

II. The cure of discouragement.

1. Reference to past experience
 2. Calling to mind the promises
- Paul's testimony.

How firm a foundation ye saints of the



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